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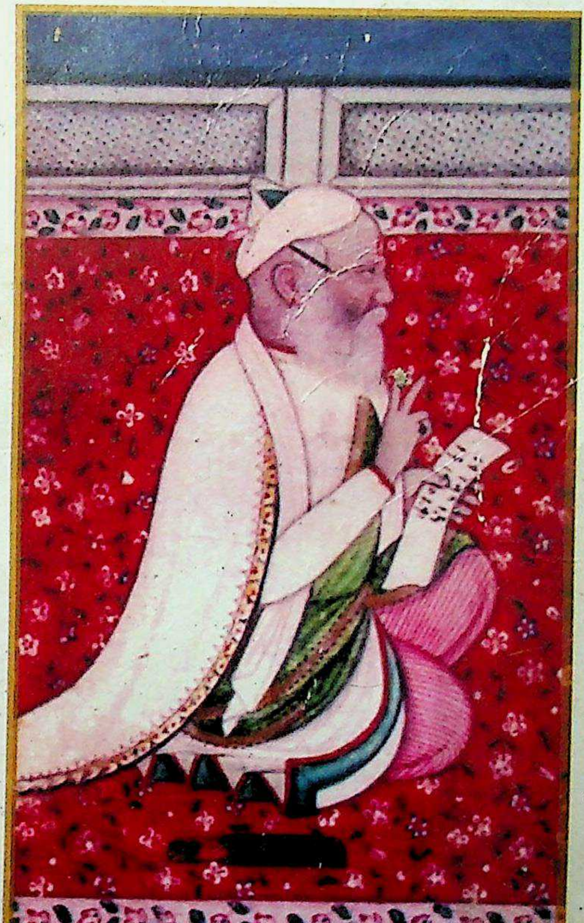
A HISTORY OF KASHMIRI PANDITS

JUSTICE JIA LAL KILAM



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Advaitavadini Kaul

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A HISTORY OF KASHMIRI PANDITS

by

JUSTICE JIA LAL KILAM

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
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FOREWORD

A History of Kashmiri Pandits by Justice Jia Lal Kilam is, in many ways, a pioneering work. It was among the first few attempts to document the history of the Kashmiri Pandits. Even so, it is remarkable for its two outstanding features. First, it has stuck to the truth and tried neither to paint it black nor whitewash it. Secondly, it is not pessimistic but tries to draw lessons for the future in words pregnant with aptness and prescience.

A historical work should, above all be factual and objective. It is unfortunate but true that the fair vale of Kashmir has received more than its due share of bloody conflict, ethnic warfare, religious strife and political intrigue. Blood has sullied the rivers and lakes of the valley again and yet again. It is no use pretending that the Hindus did not persecute the Buddhists or that the Muslims did not tyrannize the Hindus. Justice Kilam has unshakably clung to the facts, howsoever unpalatable these are.

Over the millennia, the Kashmiri Pandits have suffered tremendously. Like the Jews, they seem to be fated to be the targets of whosoever comes to power. They have been repeatedly uprooted from their motherland, and it seems that many of their tormentors have been seeking a final solution to the problem of their continued survival and what is seen as their intransigence. The latest is the massive ethnic cleansing of the Pandits from the valley in circumstances that have a grim parallel with the regime of Sikandar Butshikan, when only eleven families survived the onslaught.

A lesser man would have indulged in wailing and breast beating. Or he would have asked for a separate homeland for the Pandits and thus lent unwitting support to the two-nation theory that created Pakistan.

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Not so Kilam. He exhorts the members of the community to realize the inevitability of change and prepare themselves for adjustment to the changed circumstances. The Pandits have had a great past, but too much emphasis on the past is no good. They must draw inspiration from the past, but approach present day problems in contemporary terms. They must equip themselves with a mental outlook that is neither narrow nor sectarian, and offer a relentless battle against all disruptive forces. If they act thus, their future is assured for all time.

A very sunny and positive attitude, indeed! I have myself been a proponent of the thesis that we must see good in seeming evil. God fulfils His purpose in many ways. Perhaps the Kashmiri Pandits have a unique role to play in the history of the human race by spreading the message of Kashmir Shaivism. This is a philosophy that sees the permanent behind the ephemeral, but concedes the same reality to Nature as it ascribes to God. There is no esoteric way to *moksha*. Just the realization of who we really are is enough. We have then to live in the world with the world-view of a *sthitaprajna*.

We should be grateful to Hindu Educational Society for having entered into this joint venture with Shri Utpal Kaul of M/s Utpal Publications for bringing this rare book back into print and to Dr. Advaitavadini Kaul, Editor in the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, for her erudite presentation of Kilam's manuscript in a scholarly format, complete with a glossary, bibliography and an index. I believe the manuscript has also undergone some editorial changes, in order to make the text more grammatical and reader-friendly.

I commend the book to all lovers of Kashmir's rich history and culture.

Maharaj Krishen Kaw
Former Education Secretary
to the Goverment of India

New Delhi,
4th July, 2002

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EDITOR'S NOTE

It is very appropriate simile to say that any good manuscript is like a diamond, it glitters but only when properly cut. Keeping this in mind the role of an editor is just like that of a craftsman who handles an author's work to a mirror finish without letting that craft show through in the final work. As such the function of an editor always remains very crucial in publishing. To query facts, checking references, sources and so on is not an easy matter. The whole exercise demands a complete balanced judgement alongwith respect for the author's mode of expression.

Keeping all challenges and the realities of editing in view the publication of the present revised edition of *A History of Kashmiri Pandits* written almost half a century before by Justice Jia Lal Kilam is an attempt to incorporate the sources and references wherever possible to make this valuable record consistent and properly documented. By doing so, a perusal of the footnotes and a bibliography appended to this revised edition reveals the exact sources and references utilized by the author for compiling this volume during 1950s. This also facilitates access to various sources for further details if desired by any reader. During the course of editing it was felt necessary to incorporate a list of Glossary consisting of mostly Persian and also some Sanskrit and other terms, the use of which has been made in this volume and with the meaning of which not many readers are expected to be conversant today. Finally, the necessity of incorporating an index at the end also made the revised edition to fulfill all technical requirements of the modern publishing. Infact, the fulfillment of all these requirements facilitates a reader with easy access to the document from various perspectives. Also, including a

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biographical note on Justice Jia Lal Kilam has added to the importance of this volume. We are thankful to Shri S. L. Zadoo, 'Suman' for writing this biographical note.

For the editing of this volume I have received co-operation and help from many sources. I express my deep gratitude to the concerned personels for their co-operation and assistance during my visit to various libraries in New Delhi for tracing rare publications. These libraries include the libraries of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, National Museum, National Archives, Archeological Survey of India, Central Secretariat and Central Hindi Directorate. I also acknowledge my deep sense of gratitude to the mahants of the Udasin Ashram at Kamla Market, Delhi for their hospitality and the help when I visited the Ashram alongwith Dr. Kirti Kant Sharma who was always ready to help whenever required. I express my thanks to Dr. Kirti Kant Sharma. I also express my appreciation for the assistance and help extended to me by Shri S.S. Dogra, Smt. Anupama Dhawan, Smt. Seema Bahl and Shri Munnalal Arya from time to time. I thank them all.

Finally, I am highly grateful to Shri Maharaj Krishan Kaw, former Education Secretary to the Government of India for having graciously accepted to write a foreword to this volume. The foreword by a Kashmiri Pandit of Shri Kaw's strature was thought quite appropriate to this volume. I once again thank Shri Maharaj Krishan Kaw for writing the foreword that will remain a valuable document for the posterity. I also consider it my duty to record my sense of gratefulness to the Hindu Educational Society, Kashmir specially to its President Shri A.K. Diwani, who are running colleges both at Srinagar and in Jammu -- The Gandhi Memorial College, for the trust they have placed in me and I hope I have been equal to it.

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Last year on May 7th, 2002, it was a wonderful coincidence that Dr. C.K. Atal delivered an illustrated lecture on 'Development of the Art of Painting under Sikh Rule (1799-1860 A.D.). It was facinating to see the portraits of some prominent Kashmiri Pandits whose mention is made in this volume. I, immediately requested Dr. Atal for few copies and also sought his consent to use them in this volume. He, within no time agreed with me. I record my heartfelt gratitude to him.

Lastly, expressing gratitude to one's own self is but a mere formality and the above acknowledgments are, I should say the joint acknowledgments expressed by both of us ---- Shri Utpal Kaul of M/s Utpal Publications and myself.

One thing more which I want to share is that the taking up of the editing of this important volume on the history of Kashmiri Pandits has been a fulfillment of my obligation towards my community. But, it is only a partly fulfillment. The complete fulfillment rests with the readership particularly our young ones. Because, I find present generation almost ignorant of their roots for which the recent displacement is one of the big reasons. They must logically know that there is no doubt in that the past of Kashmiri Pandits has always remained glorious. With that they must also know how they have faced the challenges at various points of time and also struggled hard to maintain their dignity and identity till date. Now, it is the responsibility of the present generation to maintain both dignity and also the identity of this ages old creature.

I hope the reading of this volume will prove to be a source of inspiration for every reader of this volume in general and specially for our young ones. Also, it may instigate in the

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present generation of the Kashmir Pandits who are at the verge of loosing their identity, the feeling of the necessity of maintaining their identity with a positive approach towards all aspects of human existence which is the message of Kashmir Saiva thought. A positive approach is always sure to lead us towards right direction.

Advaitavadini Kaul
Editor
The Indira Gandhi National
Centre for the Arts
Janpth, New Delhi-1

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE TO THE REVISED EDITION

A History of Kashmiri Pandits written by Justice Jia Lal Kilam, was first published in 1955 by the Managing Committee of the Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar, Kashmir. The manuscript of the publication was received as a gift from the author who was the then president of the committee. It was very well received, much for its record of the socio-political and historical importance. The scholars and general readers appreciated the publication within the Kashmiri Pandit community and outside as well.

The contents of the publication are relevant even today, not only by way of filling the void. It also provides a valuable source material on the past history of Kashmir, with particular reference to the Kashmiri Pandits as the earliest settlers of that ancient and beautiful land. It further provides background to the current turmoil of this illustrious and oppressed community, which is of considerable pertinence. While giving a broad picture with mixed touches the publication covers wide range of the struggle of this community in the course of history.

Since the publication was out of print for quite some time and the demand for the same, unfortunately remained unfulfilled so far. We are pleased to present the revised edition of the book edited by Dr. Advaitavadini Kaul, Editor, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi with great care. We are grateful to her. We also thank Shri Utpal Kaul of M/s Uptal Publications for publishing this volume. It is hoped that this volume will be of special interest to historians, academics and also to the general readers interested in the history of Kashmir and the Kashmiri Pandits for their perennial role in Indian historical perspective.

President
Hindu Educational Society, Kashmir (Regd.)
Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar,
Gandhi Memorial (Camp) College,
Raipur Bantalab, Jammu - 1811123

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The Managing Committee of the Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar, has been contemplating to undertake a publication series relating to the cultural heritage of the ancient land of Kashmir. In all undertakings of this nature, hurdles to cross are many, the toughtest part of the job being the discovery of the talent that could do justice to the subjects selected. Fortunately, for the first of the series: *A History of Kashmiri Pandits* the Managing Committee had not far to go. Hon'ble Mr. Justice Jia Lal Kilam, the president of the Managing Committee, came to their rescue. For his scholarship, erudition, critical and judicious insight into historical research, Justice Kilam's stature is an envy for the tallest anywhere.

The Managing Committee of the Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar, is thankful to Mr. Justice Kilam for writing this scholarly treatise; it is also highly beholden to him for his greater sacrifice in the material sense. Mr. Justice Kilam has bestowed all rights of publication on the Managing Committee and has reserved no material interest in the treatise for himself by making a gift of it to the Gandhi Memorial College.

Such a rare and valuable contribution can come from only the men like Mr. Justice Kilam. The Managing Committee has already acknowledged its deep debt of gratitude to the learned author in an official resolution.

We are looking forward to the learned author for another gift; his first has whetted our appetite and we trust he will not grudge sparing pains for the great cause he serves.

S.N. Dhar
Advocate
Secretary, Managing Committee
Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar (Kashmir)

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PREFACE

This small book was written by me at Jammu in the winter of 1951. But then I stopped at that. For one reason or the other I did not feel inclined to publish it though I got some alluring offers from many Indian publishers. The book would have thus remained without seeing the light of the day, had not my friend Pandit Shambu Nath Dhar, intervened. He made a request to me to make a gift of the book to the Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar of whose Managing Committee Pandit Shambu Nath Dhar is the secretary and I, the president. This I could not refuse and at once I handed over the manuscript to him for arranging its printing. Pandit Shambu Nath Dhar himself belongs to a high family of the Kashmiri Pandits. He is a direct descendant of Mirza Pandit Dhar who has an assured place in the history of Kashmir.

But then I offer no apology for having written the book, which I might say has been written with a definite purpose to show that a small community also can hold its own against all odds even under most adverse circumstances, provided it has equipped itself with those basic virtues which provide moral strength and, therefore, justification for it to live a life of self-respect and self-reliance. The epochmaking changes that have swept over the country in no distant past have created a sort of fear and anxiety in many minds belonging to the Kashmiri Pandit community.

These fears and anxieties can be removed only if the people first realize the inevitibility of change and then prepare themselves for adjustment to the changed circumstances. The Kashmiri Pandits had understood this secret of life in the past

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and their history shows that they acted up to this principle all through. At times it demanded of them colossal suffering and sacrifice. But they continued the struggle with methods both right and righteous and succeeded in maintaining their existence as effective partners in the great drama of life. There can be no denial to the fact that the Kashmiri Pandits have had a great past, but they should know that too much emphasis on the past alone is not going to do any good to them. They must certainly draw inspiration from the past, but then their approach to the present day problems must be in terms of the modern world. They must equip themselves with a mental outlook that is neither narrow nor sectarian and with a single-minded devotion, unmindful of results, they must offer a relentless battle to all disruptive forces like communalism, parochialism and sectarianism wherever they exist. If they act thus, their future both as a community and as a group of individuals is assured for all time.

Srinagar, **Jia Lal Kilam**
14th June, 1955

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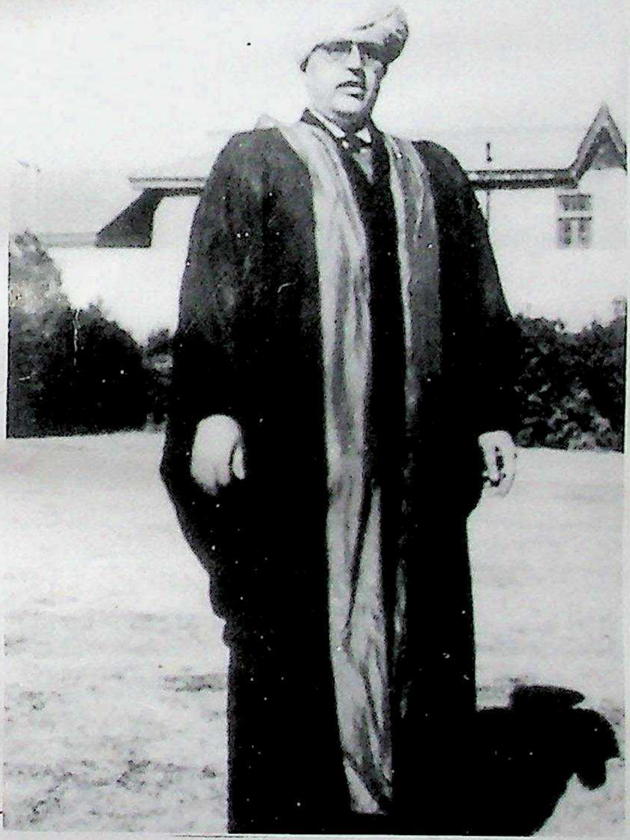

Justice Jia Lal Kilam

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JIA LAL KILAM- A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JIA LAL KILAM was born in 1898 at Srinagar in a well known Kaul family of Kashmiri Pandits. The family originally hailed from a village known as Kilam in Kashmir. Here they owned vast estates and held positions of status in the *durbar* of the then ruler of Kashmir. It was at the instance of his grandfather who moved to Srinagar and the family carried alongwith the name of the village. The family became known as Kilams which is carried with the names of the family till date. His grandfather held a post of *nai'b wazir-i-wazarat* and was known as the landlord of Kashmir. His father Pandit Sona Kaul Kilam was a police officer. This was a post which was deemed to be a symbol of status at that time. He was known for his efficiency and capability but had to give up the post much earlier because of his commitments to look after his vast landed property.

After his graduation from the S.P. College, Srinagar Jia Lal Kilam joined the Law College, Lahore in the year 1919. As the Bachelor of Law in the year 1922 with distinction he joined the Bar in Srinagar. Here he practised for sometime and earned a name at a very young age. He was selected for the post of a *munsiff* but gave up this prize post because of his indomitable nature which always impelled him to lead an independent and free life.

Justice Kilam started his practice in the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and within a short time earned a name in his profession both as a civil and criminal lawyer. He was known for his sharp intelligence, ready wit and oratory. This

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reminds of an incident while he was arguing a criminal appeal before one of the eminent judges of the High Court. The judge not being convinced by the point raised in the appeal remarked, "Well, Mr. Kilam but you have missed the train" and apt was the reply, "Your Lordship, I never thought I was standing before a railway station."

As a lawyer he always fought for the privileges of the lawyers who were at the treshold of their profession. He never maintained distances and always mixed with young and the old. He was very much known for his fund of humour. It needs special mention that he was elected president of the Kashmir Bar Association for nearly a decade.

Justice Kilam, however never confined himself to the precincts of the courts. He also played an important role in many social and political activities in the State despite having been brought up in an affluent family. Justice Kilam while drawn into the vortex of politics played an active role in the popular movements and always rebelled against what he thought militated the interests of the suppressed people both in the social and political spheres. He first raised his voice against the autocratic rule of the princes of Indian States in 1920s, in an article published in a journal in one of the princes' States. This brought him in contact with Sir Tej Bhadur Sapru who was an eminent jurist and a statesman of the times and acted as adviser to many princes of India.

Here, in the State, Justice Kilam was moved by the social evils and the economic grievances of the Pandit community. He alongwith other associates started an agitation in 1930s popularly known as Roti Agitation in order to ventilate the grievances of the community. He was arrested for defying the prohibitary orders promulgated by the authorities. He was elected general secretary and then the president of the

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All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference known as 'Sanatan Dharam Yuvak Sabha'. It was during this time that he alongwith his close associate Pandit Kashyap Bandhu made an untiring effort to bring a change in the social infrastructure of the community which was beset with many age-old social evils. A tirade was launched against the system of dowry, and the functions for marriages which involved huge expenditure. The fall-out was that marriages were celebrated with simplicity. It was then that under the chairmanship of Pandit Kashyap Bandu, Kashmiri Pandit women changed their age-old dress by adoping simple saree as their dress. He was in short a social crusader.

Justice Kilam never confined himself to narrow, rabid communal attitude in his life. I am reminded of an episode when as a young lawyer he was once invited on dinner by his close friends from Lahore who stayed in a houseboat. While the party was on, one of his close friends passed an obscene remark on a Muslim boat-woman (*hanzni*). Taking strong objection on this he lost his temper and the dinner party ended in a regular brawl and the two friends never met again. He had that Kashmiriyat in his mould and would never tolerate any insult to a Kashmiri irrespective of caste, religion or sex.

It was in 1938 when Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah came under the spell of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who sponsored a move to bring about communal unity and to form a nationalist organization in the State. Justice Kilam alongwith his progressive associates gave whole-hearted co-operation to this move. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah changed the name of the communal organization known as J&K Muslim Conference to 'J&K National Conference' and Justice Kilam was its active member and held important post in the organization. He was the architect of the 'National Demand'

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(charter of freedom) which was sent to the Maharaja. It was for the first time that the demand to the government responsible for the people was made in the State. But, before anything could happen, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was arrested and he had to suffer imprisonment. Justice Kilam followed the suit and was sentenced to six months imprisonment and was lodged in the Mirpur Jail (now in Pakistan).

During the Maharaja's regime Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah gave a call for agitation against the autocratic rule of the Maharaja. This was popularly known as Quit Kashmir Movement. He was arrested and put to historical trial at Badami Bagh cantonment. It was Justice Kilam who was nominated his senior defence counsel at the behest of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This was the trial when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Asaf Ali also appeared as defence counsel. It does not only indicate the recognition of Justice Kilam's legal acumen but it is also the glaring proof to his secular bent of mind and his love for the freedom of common people.

In 1947 when Pakistan sponsored raiders attacked Kashmir, the clouds of gloom and despair hovered over Kashmir. Justice Kilam worked day and night shoulder to shoulder with Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah to keep the morale of the people high. He made several trips to Delhi alongwith Sheikh Sahib till the Government of India acceded to the request of Kashmiris to defend them against the raiders.

When Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah took over as head of the emergency administration, Justice Kilam was his chief emergency officer, incharge Food and Supplies till the formation of the Cabinet in 1948.

It can be aptly said of Justice Kilam that he was indeed a man of varied interests. Besides his profession and politics

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he had a flair for writing and dabbled in journalism when there were very few newspapers published in the State. He also edited a weekly newspaper known as 'Quami-Dard' and used to contribute articles to 'Daily Martand' and 'Daily Milap'. Just before his passing away he contributed articles to 'Daily Martand' pertaining to the controversy raised by China about Ladakh before the episode of 1962. It was due to his keen study of the history of J&K State that he put forth the historical proof to establish that China had no claim at any time upon any part of Ladakh. It bears mention that some years ago the same article was quoted by the National daily 'The Statesman', wherein a reference was made to Justice Jai Lal Kilam.

In this book Justice Kilam presents a vivid account of the cultural heritage of the ancient land of Kashmir. It also presents a systematic account of the origin and role of the Kashmiri Pandits during the reign of different rulers of Kashmir besides giving details of other historical events. It is evident from the publisher's note written by Shri S.N. Dhar, advocate and then secretary of the Managing Committee of the Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar, who has mentioned that the Managing Committee contemplated to undertake publication of such works and how they were authorized to publish this book by Justice Kilam, who reserved no material interest for himself out of its publication. This shows the man and his dedication to the institution of which he was the chairman for many years.

Justice Kilam had great interest in music from his very young age. He would invite famous classical musicians from different parts of India. He was extremely fond of traditional sufiyana mousiqi. He himself played on sitar, dilruba and harmonium with ease. He had good knowledge of *ragas*.

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He was the first Kashmiri Pandit who was elected to the *Praja Sabha* (Legislative Assembly) besides being elected, as municipal commissioner. As already noted his oratory was well known. He could speak in English and Urdu fluently which made Mr. Mehta, (then) president of the *Praja Sabha* to remark: "with Kilam in the assembly I feel as if I am in the Parliament".

In the year 1948 he was elevated to the Bench as judge of the High Court of J&K State. It was for the first time that a member of the Bar of the State was chosen to this high post in the judiciary. It is very well known that after his elevation justice Kilam snapped all ties with the past and one and all found in him nothing but a judge. He dispensed justice without fear or favour, and within a short spell of time he earned the fame as an independent and fearless judge for he was always guided by his conscience and legal acumen. In the year 1953 when Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was dismissed as the prime minister and thereby arrested alongwith many of his associates, some important *habeas corpus* petitions were filed against the orders of arrest in the High Court. The petitioners were heard by the Full Bench. Since the constitutional and legal points involved were of far reaching consequences and seriously effecting the stability of the new government, it was Shri S.K. Daftary, the Attorney General of India who appeared on behalf of the State and Shri T.R. Bhasin appeared for the petitioners. It was Justice Kilam who wrote a dissenting judgement concurred by another judge and differed with the chief justice with the result the petitioners were set scot free. This is one of the many examples wherein he showed his independence and fairness irrespective of the fact or fear how the government responded to it. His sharp intellect and decisive disposition always stood in good stead and resulted

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in quick decision of the cases. In 1950, when Justice Kania, the first chief justice of Independent India conducted the inspection of the High Court, he listened to the arguments addressed before the Division Bench which constituted of Chief Justice Wazir and Justice Kilam in an important case. Justice Kania was deeply impressed by his sharpness and legal acumen. Justice Kilam who decided the case at the same time while dictating the judgement extempore. Many of his judgements are cited in the law reports which serve as beacon light for the legal profession. After a distinguished tenure of a decade he left an indelible impression of his sharpness, legal acumen, integrity, fearlessness and sense of justice as a judge.

There is much more that could be written about the qualities of his head and heart. One can say without any fear of contradiction that he was the man who was a parliamentarian, a politician, a jurist, a historian and also a Persian and Sanskrit scholar and at the top of all he had great love for music and art. As a lawyer he was keen to win the case; as a judge he was at pains to decide the case without fear or favour; as a historian he never shirked from placing the facts objectively; as a politician he was devoted to his country and loved Kashmir and its people and as a leader he would guide the people in right direction. As a man he was sincere, self respecting, humane and affectionate but he would never permit anyone high or low to hurt his keen sense of self respect.

After his retirement Justice Kilam was appointed the chairman of the Pay Commission for a year or so. This great soul of Kashmir passed away suddently at the age of 62 in the year 1960. Even in his death the fact remained that he was one of the shining sons of Kashmir. The whole State was plunged into grief. All the government offices and courts

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were closed for the day as a mark of respect to this great soul. Rich tributes were paid by Bakshi Gulam Muhammad, the prime minister; Shri Shiv Narayan Fotedar, chairman of the Legislative Council; Gulam Muhammad Sadiq, president of the Democratic National Conference and also by All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference. Justice Kilam's contribution during the freedom struggle, his undaunted patriotism and secular outlook were praised by one and all. Shri Shiv Narayan Fotedar while paying his tributes aptly remarked that Justice Kilam was an institution by himself and he was against all exploitations of the downtrodden.

Despite his feudal background he whole-heartedly supported the progressive policy of land to the tiller because of his socialistic frame of mind. His staunch secular outlook was un-questionable. After the epoch-making changes that swept over the country, Justice Kilam's advice to his community was "first to realize the inevitability of change and then to prepare themselves for adjustment to the changed circumstances, equipped with a mental outlook that was neither narrow nor sectarian and with single minded devotion fight the disruptive forces of communalism, parochialism and sectarianism wherever they exist".

For his qualities of head and heart, judicious insight, political thought, and freedom struggle, the name of Justice Jia Lal Kilam will go down in the annals of our history as one of the shining stars of Kashmir.

S. L. Zadoo 'Suman'

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1
A SURVEY OF THE ANCIENT HINDU RULE

I

THE HISTORY of Kashmir, as elsewhere in India, begins with the story about the Brahmana-Kshatriya alliance, one supporting the other for their common good. The Kshatriya ruling classes bestowed rich endowments upon the Brahmanical institutions and the Brahmans in turn sang their praises and this helped in the creation of an ideology in their favour. The social polity which guaranteed to both an ascendency over others lasted as the tribal economy prevailed in the society. The history of this period in Kashmir naturally deals only with the exploits and achievements of these two classes. But such a state of affairs could not last for long. Society did at last emerge out of the primitive tribal communal stage and even in Vedic times we find the birth of a rich trading class. This class by its contact with the outside world became the harbinger of a new set of ideas free from the shackles of rigid Brahmanical tenets. This gave rise to a system of materialistic thought even prior to the advent of Buddhism. In course of time, the trading classes gathered much political power and gradually organized themselves in guilds to protect themselves from the undue exactions of their Kshatriya rulers. They sought the alliance of the freed Shudras and husbandmen who had by now begun to own private property in land and goods. In course of time, much of the political power fell into the hands of this new trading class, and the social rigidity, which was the result of Brahmanical teachings intended to maintain their superiority and of the ruling classes, began to break down. This disturbed the social equilibrium by creating

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many more classes. In the course of further development we find different classes fighting with each other for asserting their superiority. At one time the Kshatriyas asserted their superiority over all other classes, and at another time there was a feud between the people and the nobles. At last there came about an unprecedented struggle between the Kshatriyas and the Brahmans. In the mythological literature the Brahmans are said to have been led by Parashurama and the Kshatriyas by Kiratarjuna[1] also known as Sahasrarjuna. This great struggle is said to have lasted for about a hundred years and ended in a great disaster for the Brahmans, though at last they succeeded in gaining some concessions such as freedom from capital punishment etc.[2] As already stated, the birth of a rich commercial class created a breach in the citadel of the tribal economy, and freed peoples' thought from the thraldom of Brahmanical priest-craft, and it was but natural that the ruling classes should have turned now more towards them for help and support than their erstwhile allies the Brahmans, who in changed circumstances could not be of much use. A struggle between Kshatriyas and Brahmans was therefore inevitable, in which the Kshatriyas were by far the successful party and the Brahmans in spite of securing some concessions, were forced to play the second fiddle. Freedom of thought now became an established fact. Heretical sects with a definite anti-Brahman bias began to grow. The Brahmans retorted by calling them *Anarya*, i.e. those who had deviated from the Vedic path. The seed of heterodoxy was sown in *Magadha desha*, and it was there that the teachings of the Buddha were first accepted. It is noteworthy that the founders, expounders

1. Ref. *Srimad Bhagavata, 1.3.20;* Kalidasa, *Raghuvamsa, 6.38-39, 11.68*
2. Dutt, B.N., *Studies in India Social Polity*. [Ref., *The Arthashastra of Kautilya,* 4.8.32-8].

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and the leaders of Buddhistic thought were all from the Kshatriya class, who now allied themselves freely with freed Shudras and Vaishyas as against the Brahmans, thus bringing into existence a new phase in class struggle, i.e. religious struggle. This struggle lasted for a number of centuries, till Brahmanical counter-revolution succeeded in reestablishing its hold, though not without making many concessions to Buddhism, such as accepting the Buddha as an *avatara*.

In Kashmir prior to the installation of Buddhism in the land as State religion, we come across with a string of kings, some of whom built towns, constucted canals, and helped agriculture and yet there were many others who freely partook of the moral anarchy that had become the order of the day. It is evident that even before Buddhism had set its foot in Kashmir there was great deal of revulsion in men's minds against the performance of the ritualistic ceremonies in a mechanical manner, and in the absence of an alternative programme of religion, moral and social anarchy was the result. But even as it was, there were preachers (probably Buddhists) who tried to wean people from the path of sin and error. There were also kings who lived a Buddhistic life though without proclaiming themselves as such. Thus we read about King Surendra and King Janaka having built *viharas*[3]. With the country passing into the hands of Asoka, Buddhism received a great encouragement. The rise of Buddhism and the Brahmanical reactions to it gave rise to a long drawn struggle between two rival ideologies. Powerful kings - with both the Buddhist and Brahman leaning - sprang from this struggle. Some of them were great builders. Asoka himself

3. Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, I. 93-4.

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built many *stupas* and founded the city of Srinagar[4]. The rule of Asoka in Kashmir was followed by that of Jalauka, who is mentioned in *Rajatarangini* as his son. Buddhism not having yet planted its roots deep, this prince reverted back to Brahmanism, built many temples, bestowed rich endowments on them. Besides, a number of "men well versed in law and religion belonging to all the four castes", were imported from Kanauj where he had led a successful military expedition.[5] It might seem that Brahmanical reaction was successful. But Buddhism was taking rapid strides towards its own success. The result was that not long after Jalauka had to make peace with the Buddhists and rebuild a monastery for them, which he had once destroyed.[6] During the reign of Kanishka, "Buddhism flourished in Kashmir and during his long reign Buddhist hermits were all-powerful in the country and the Buddhist religion pevailed without opposition." The great Nagarjuna, said to be a *Bodhisattva* and described as one of the greatest philosophers of India, lived in Kashmir during Kanishka's reign.[7] It was during this period that Kanishka organized the great Buddhist Council, which was presided over by two eminent scholars of the day - Asvaghosha and Vasumitra. The council was held at Kanishkapura[8] in Kashmir and was attended by 500 monks from all over India. During the reign of Abhimanyu who succeeded Kanishka, Nagarjuna made converts to Buddhism and defeated the Brahmans in discussion and argument. Civil war soon followed and the Brahmans in alliance with a local tribe known as Nagas inflicted death, disaster and other untold miseries upon the

4. Kalhana, I. 101-7
5. Kalhana, I. 108-20.
6. Kalhana, I. 140-47.
7. Kalhana, I. 169-73.
8. Modern Kanishpur, a suburb of Baramulla.

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Buddhists. Chandracharya, a renowned grammarian of Kashmir, led the Brahmanical side on the dialectical plane. Inspite of the Brahman opposition, Buddhism did not lose its hold on men's minds. Under its influence, Kashmir produced scholars of great renown who carried Buddhism far and wide. Kumarajiva, a great Kashmiri scholar, went during the regime of the later Chin dynasty (384-417 A.D.) to China with the message of the Buddha and gained a title of great honour from the Chinese savants. He is referred to in China as "one of the four suns of Buddhism", and is "credited with the introduction of a new alphabet".[9] There are other Kashmiri Buddhist missionaries mentioned such as Shakyashribhadra (405 A.D.), Ratnavajra, Shyama Bhatta and others who went to China and Tibet to preach Buddhism there.[10] Brahmans at last regained their supremacy though gradually. During the reign of Nara I "thousands of monasteries were burnt, and thousands of villages that supported those monasteries were given over to the Brahmans".[11] The Brahmans having succeeded in establishing their supremacy set about in right earnest in strengthening themselves and their position. Many superstitious observances and practices were introduced. Thought and culture were denied to everybody excepting themselves, and modern Hinduism in Kashmir began its growth. But this degraded the Brahmans themselves. During Mihirakula's reign, many shameless practices are ascribed to them.

Gopaditya, sixth in the line after Mahirakula, expelled from the country those Brahmans who had taken to irreligious

9. Kak, R.C., *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir,* p.3.
10. Kaul, Anand, *Kashmiri Pandit,* p.30.
11. Kalhana, I. 199-200.

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and immoral practices and in their stead many Brahmans were invited from other parts of India. Brahmanism regained its supremacy completely. During Meghavahana's rule, Buddhism succeeded in regaining some of its former glory. But it was no better than the last flicker of a fading flame.

Thus ends the first phase, i.e. the struggle between Buddhism and Brahmanism in the history of Hindu Kashmir.

II

With the establishment of the Karkota dynasty (627-753 A.D.) we arrive at the period of comparative historical authenticity. It was during this period that the Chinese savant Hiuen tsiang came on a pilgrimage to Kashmir. Buddhism was then in a condition of decay in Kashmir as becomes evident from his remark:

> that this kingdom is not much given to the faith and the temples of the heretics are their sole thought.[12]

But to the learning of the priestly class he pays a glowing tribute when he says that:

> This country from remote times was distinguished for learning, and these priests were all of high religious merit and conspicuous virtue, as well as of marked talent and power of clear exposition of doctrine; and though the other priests (i.e. of other nations) were in their own way distinguished, yet they could not be compared with these so different were they from the ordinary class.[13]

12. Beal, Samuel, *Si-Yu-Ki*, Vol. I, p. 158.
13. Beal, Samuel, *The Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, p. 71.

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The most important king of the Karkota dynasty was Lalitaditya Muktapida (697-733 A.D.). During his reign Kashmir reached the highest peak of military glory. He led successful military expeditions in the south as far as Kanauj, wherefrom he was accompanied back by the great poet Bhavabhuti.[14] He held sway over a major portion of the Punjab in the south and Baltistan in the north. The successful military expeditions are borne out by a letter written in 712 A.D. by Dahar,the king of Sindh to Muhammad Bin Qasim, the first Muslim invader of India, in which we come across the following passage:

> If I had sent against you the King of Kashmir on whose threshold the other rulers of Hind had placed their heads, who sways the whole of Hind, even the countries of Makran and Turan....[15]

The king of Kashmir referred to in the letter is no other than Lalitaditya. He sent an embassy to China which was very well received there. He was a great builder. The world famous Martanda temple ruins bear eloquent testimony to his love for building and the gigantic irrigation schemes which he inaugurated, added quite greatly to the cultivable area of the country. It appears that a feudal class had come into existence during these days. Its growth was distasteful to Lalitaditya and the instructions that he sent to his government

14. Kalhana, IV. 126 ff.
15. *Chacha-nama*, chapter III, [The *Chach-nama* is the Persian translation of the extinct Arabic *Futuh-us-Sind* by Ali-bin Hamid bin Abu Bakr Kufi. The Persian translation was made in 613 A.H. (1216 A.C.), during the time of Amir Qubacha who ruled Sindh and who was also the rival and contemporary of Iltutmish of Delhi. The English translation only in extracts had appeared in JASB no. LXXIV and no. X, 1841].

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from an expedition in the north are so interesting that no apology is sought for quoting them here in extenso:

> The people who dwell in mountains should every year be punished without fault for if they get money and fortify themselves they will turn out formidable. Every care should be taken that there should not remain more food supply than is required for one year's consumption nor more oxen than are required for the tillage of their fields. Because if they come to possess more wealth, they would become formidable Damaras, strong enough even to disregard the King's commands.[16]

Further he impresses upon them that:

> when the villagers have clothes, wives, eatables, ornaments, elephants, horses and houses like the citizens... when soldiers are raised from one district only, when government officials establish marriage alliances with each other, then you should know that the lot of the people turns worse.[17]

From the passages quoted above it becomes quite clear that Lalitaditya looked with great abhorrence upon the growth of a powerful class amongst the rural population. A powerful challenging feudal class being in existence he wanted to break its power by all possible means at his disposal. The conquests of Lalitaditya brought Kashmir nearer to the external world, and must have given rise to a rich commercial class generally residing in cities and towns. Towards this class he exhibited a great deal of partiality, for it must have been they who supplied him with finances to conduct his wars. So great was

16. Kalhana, IV. 346-48.
17. Kalhana, IV. 349-52.

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his revulsion against agricultural population that he exhorts his officers that not more than one year's rations should be allowed to remain with the villagers for fear lest they should become formidable Damaras.

But who are these Damaras often mentioned in the annals of Kashmir. For long various Indologists held that the *Damaras* were a turbulent tribe who inhabited the northern districts of Kashmir, but the consensus of authoritative opinion borne out by the annals of Kashmir is that the word *'damara'* signified a feudal chief and did not connote a tribe, though in course of time this term was used as synonymous with a turbulent person or group of such persons. Thus it becomes clear that class struggle in the time of Lalitaditya had entered a new phase in the history of Kashmir, i.e. the feudal or land owning classes versus the growing rich commerical class. In this anxiety to support a growing commercial class, Lalitaditya seems to have lost all support of the agricultural masses whom he suppressed lest they should become "formidable Damaras", He died while leading an expedition in the north, and with his passing away the magnificent edifice of government raised by him with so much effort tumbled to pieces. A general disorder became now the order of the day except during the reign of Jayapida (764-795 A.D.). He was a great conquerer and lover of learning. Katyayana's commentary on *Panini* was recompiled. Vasugupta, the founder of Shaiva philosophy, belonged to this era; and so many other philosophers and poets of great renown. The Chinese pilgrim Ou-K'ong reached Kashmir during this period (759 A.D.). He took here full vows as a regular monk. He stayed in Kashmir for about four years. This time he spent in visiting holy places or studying Sanskrit. From his account it appears that Buddhism was still prominently existing if not flourishing. During this period, there was the rise of the Kayastha class who are described as

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kings, financiers and advisers. Being the financiers of the king, they naturally amassed huge political power. A struggle with Brahmans was inevitable, and it is related that the Brahmans brought about the death of the king for his partiality towards this class.[18] It is significant that any new class which sprang into prominence had to measure its strength with the Brahmans. The next eighty years witnessed notning but the installation and dethronement of puppet kings, rising of insurgent chieftains, and intrigues amongst rival cliques till the coming of another landmark in the history of Kashmir, the accession of Avantivarman (855/6-883 A.D.) to the throne who was the founder of the Utpala dynasty. Durng his reign Kashmir witnessed an unprecedented economic prosperity. Agriculture flourished, and the industries, commerce and trade were in a thriving condition. Extensive drainage and irrigation schemes were undertaken, and the country was freed from the danger of floods. A low caste Hindu, Suyya by name, assisted him in all these beneficent projects. Culturally also Kashmir witnessed great advancement. Kayyatacharya, Somananda, Muktakantha-swamin, Shivaswamin and Anandavardhana and Kallata, the great Shaiva philosophers and authors, flourished during this period. The feudal barons became more powerful than ever before. Dhanava Damara seized a number of villages bequeathed to some temples. This Damara had an infantry of his own, and was so powerful that he refused to come to the royal presence though sent for and when he came he came under an armed escort. He was, however, killed for his overbearing attitude under the king's orders.[19]

18. Kalhana, IV. 620-55.
19. Kalhana, V. 51-61.

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Avantivarman was the Vaishnavite king of Kashmir, during his reign temples were dedicated to Vishnu. He was succeeded by his son Shankaravarman (883-902 A.D.) who was an ambitious and oppressive ruler. He conquered the neighbouring principalities including Gujrat which was then under the rule of one Ala Khan, who by his name appears to be a Muslim, though till then the Muslims had not set their foot in the Punjab. That Sankaravarman led an expedition to Kabul also we shall further see. He founded the city of Shankarapura now known as Pattan, built two temples there, started a wool industry and converted it into a market for selling and buying cattle. During the reign of Shankaravarman the struggle between the Brahmans and other castes such as Kayasthas reached its climax. The power of Brahmans was broken. The sacred character of their citadels was violated. Offerings which were made to temples, incense meant to be burnt there and the villages bequeathed to them and the riches lying there were all appropriated by the king.[20] He refused to talk in Sanskrit, and always used the language used by the people (Apabramsha). For this he is greatly blamed by the Brahman historians. But he encouraged undustries, though at the same time he heavily taxed them. As against the industrialists, he treated the agricultural population with great scorn, and for the first time in the history of Kashmir he introduced the insitution of *begar* (forced labour from villagers). The Kayasthas now became the dominant class who introduced a number of taxes and allied themselves with the king. The Brahmans on their part produced a huge mass of literature in which the Kayasthas were reduced to a position of great scorn and ridicule.[21] With the death of

20. Kalhana, V. 43-6, 128-227.
21. Ref. Ksemendra, *Narmamala*.

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Shankaravarman general disorder set in. This threw into prominence the turbulent Kashmiri tribe, the Tantrins. They set up one king after another, according as they were bribed and courted until Chakravarman (923-933 A.D.) with the help of the Damaras and Ekangas broke their power. When it is borne in mind that the Damaras were the feudal barons and the Ekangas the bodyguards of the king, the class character of the strife between them and the Tantrins who were common people representing popular upsurge and recently come into prominence can very easily be understood. But Chakravarman was himself killed by some Damaras, and after some time the Utpala dynasty ceased to exist and was replaced by the first Lohara dynasty.

During this period, though very much disturbed, by political vicissitudes, Kashmir was culturally quite alive, Pradyumna Bhatta, Utpalacharya, Ramakantha, Prajnarjuna, Lakshmanagupta and Mahadeva Bhatta made colossal contributions to Shaivite thought, and some of them have been given a very high place of honour amongst ancient Indian philosophers.

III

The Lohara dynasty occupies an important place in the history of Kashmir, for it was during this period that Kashmir came in contact with the Muslim conquerers of India. During the reign of Sangramaraja (1003-1028 A.D.) it is recorded that:

> Kashmirians crossed the river Toushi and destroyed the detachment of soldiers sent by Hammira to reconnoitre. But though the Kashmirians were eager for the fight, the wise Shahi repeatedly advised them to take shelter

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> behind the rocks, but Tunga disregarded the advice. The general of the Turushkas was wellversed in the tactics of war, and brought out his army early in the morning. On this the army of Tunga dispersed.[22]

Hammira is the abbreviated form of *amir-ul-mommin*, a title used by Mahmud of Ghazni for himself, and the Turushkas or Turks is the name given by Kalhana to the Muslims. As such the above passage clearly refers to the last resistance which was offered by Trilochanapala to Mahmud since he also sent a detachment of troops.[23] As a result of Mahmud's invasion the Punjab passed into Muslim hands, and most of the tribes on the borders of Kashmir embraced Islam. These people even after their conversion to Islam, continued to come to Kashmir. Some came as traders, some as tourists and some came for proselytising people to the new faith. Some of them settled in Kashmir, and made some converts as well. But upon the politics of the country, they did not make any deep impression, at least for the time being.

Sangramaraja was succeeded by his son Hariraja (1028 A.D.). In spite of the great anxiety exhibited by Lalitaditya to supress them, the Damaras had by now amassed huge power and found themselves in a position to flout the king's authority. We have seen that side by side with the feudal chiefs who had become very powerful during Lalitaditya's reign, and which necessitated that ruler to adopt extraordinary measures for their suppression, a class of merchants had also sprung into existence, who received a special measure of encouragement from their rulers. The rulers in their warfare required financial support which was given to them by the

22. Kalhana, VII. 53-7.
23. See part IV of this chapter.

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merchant classes, and who as a result found greater markets available in the newly acquired territories. A struggle was therefore inevitable which took the shape of the Damaras (feudal lords) versus the rulers. During the reign of Ananta (1028-1063 A.D.) the Damaras rose in rebillion, but were ruthlessly crushed by the king. The king defeated the Raja of Chamba through whose territories the road to Eastern Punjab passed, but failed in Hazara which connected Kashmir with Western Punjab and Afghan territory. After him came Harsha (1089-1101 A.D.). This prince who was a jumble of contraries, appears to have manifested in himself the confusion of times. He was cruel and kind-hearted, liberal and greedy, and cunning and thoughtless. But he was a great lover of learning and encouraged learned scholars from abroad to settle in Kashmir. The Damaras again rose in rebellion, but the king crushed them with great ruthlessness. But they soon made common cause with his two cousins, Sushala and Uccala, who rose to rebellion against the king. By his extravagance and other ill-advised expenditure, Harsha weakened himself financially. To replenish his treasury, he embarked upon a policy of exhorbitant taxation and even robbed the temples of their valuable.[24] This naturally created a great deal of resentment amongst his subject and his none-too-loyal officers. To meet such unforeseen contigencies, he opened a new leaf in the annals of Kashmir. Hitherto the kings of Kashmir relied solely upon their Ekanga and Tantrin soldiers. But Harsha enlisted Muslims, and organized the army on a new model. Each group of hundred soldiers was placed under the charge of a Muslim commander, thus making it impossible for his soldiers to hatch plots, or run away from the battlefield.[25] From Harsha's time onwards, the Muslims as a

24. Kalhana, VII. 1087, 1090-95.
25. Kalhana, VII. 1149.

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class appeared in the political field. For long did they keep themselves allied with the rulers of the country and helped them in maintaining themselves on their tottering thrones. Their fighting qualities and the royal patronage made the Muslims a powerful factor in the bodypolitic. But it took them another two centuries before they became the masters of the country. During these two centuries, the Hindu rule lingered on more dead than alive, crippled and weakened by internecine strifes of the nobles and the restiveness of the upper classes and the resentment of the bulk of the population. After the fall of Harsha, Uccala (1101-1111 A.D.) mounted the throne with the help of the Damaras. He fell out with them soon, probably because he could not fulfil their extravagant demands and dealt a crushing blow to them. In the reign of Sushala (1112-1128 A.D.), who followed Uccala, the Damaras again rose in rebellion. They attacked and plundered the city of Srinagar and reduced the king to such a plight that he had to flee for his life to Poonch. Bikhshachara, a distant cousin of Sushala was selected for kingship by the rebellious nobles. He was in constant fear of Sushala and was very suspicious even of his supporters. He organized a cavalry force manned mainly by the Muslims.[26] Kalhana records the brag of this force in the following words:

> Every individual Turushka (Muslim soldier) showed a cord and said that he would bind and drag Sushala with it.

But:

> the Turushka soldiers dropped their ropes in fear and were destroyed by Sushala in a short time. The Turushkas gone, Bickhshachara was defeated and Sushala again became the king.

26. Kalhana, VIII. 885-87.

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He was followed by Jayasimha (1128-1155 A.D.). During his reign there was general disorder created by rebellions of warring chiefs, but the king could cope with it and even defeated a detachment of foreign troops who were about to raid the country.[27] His successors were unworthy of the kingly duties. Another tribe known as Lavanyas now came into prominence. During the reign of Gopadeva (1171-1180 A.D.) the Brahmans gained a great deal of supremacy, but were thwarted by the Lavanyas who sided with the king. During the reign of Rajadeva (1212-1235 A.D.) some Bhattas (Brahmans) who had helped in his investiture as king, having been insulted by him, conspired to install somebody from amongst the Khashas on the throne of Kashmir. But their conspiracy did not long remain a secret and on orgy of destruction and plunder was let loose upon them. Some were killed and other suppressed with atrocious mercilessness, and to save themselves the cry was raised everywhere "*na battoham....*" "I am not a Bhatta." This is the first onslaught recorded in history against the Brahmanas of Kashmir. There is nothing very important amongst Rajadeva's successors except that intrigue and insurgency and civil war went on unabated. The whole polity was undermined by internecine deadly struggle, and it did not take much time for a crisis to develop which ended the ancient Hindu rule for all time.

IV

Kashmir, though cut off by impregnable mountain barriers from the rest of the world, had always very deep cultural and political relations with her neighbours. She had diplomatic relations with China and other countries in the north.

27. Kalhana, VIII. 1358 ff.

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Lalitaditya led his armies as far as Gobi desert in the north. For long the exploits of Lalitaditya which have been narrated in the *Rajatarangini* quite in detail were treated by scholars as a mere figment of the imagination of Kalhana, but Sindh ruler Dahar's letter to Muhammad Bin Qasim, to which reference has been made earlier, sets at rest all the controversy on this score. Dahar's letter finds its place in *Chacha-nama* which is an account of the war between Dahar and Muhammad Bin Qasim given by an Arab eyewitness. The nearest Hindu kingdom of Kashmir was that of Kabul. With Kabul, Kashmir was tied with bonds of religion, but she had also political relations with her which lasted for a number of centuries. Reference may be made in this behalf to Alberuni an Arab scholar who came to India with Mahmud of Ghazni at the beginning of the 11th century and stayed in India for a number of years. Alberuni has left a book on India in which he has given with great scholarly precision an account of the social, political and economic conditions of the country. Alberuni writes that:

> The Hindus had kings residing in Kabul... The last king of this race (Kshatriya) was Lagutarman and his *wazir* was Kallar, a Brahman... Lagutarman had bad manners and worse behavior on account of which people complained of him greatly to the *wazir*. Now the *wazir* put him in chains... and he occupied the royal throne. After him ruled the Brahman kings Samand (Samanta), Kamalu, Bhim (Bhima), Jaipal (Jaipala), Anandapala, and Tarojanapala (Trilochanapala).[28]

Out of the seven Brahman kings of Kabul mentioned by Alberuni, we find mention of four in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* with difference that Kalhana calls the first king Lalliya and

28. Sachau, Edward C. (ed.), *Alberuni's India*, pp. 192,193-94.

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not Kallar as Alberuni call him, the other three being Kamaluka, Bhima and Trilochanapala. Kalhana wrote his history in 1148 A.D. about one hundred and twenty five years after the fall of Trilochanapala, who according to Alberuni was killed in 1021 A.D. There is one thing very interesting about the Hindu kings of Kabul, that is they were known as Shahs and their dynasty as Hindu Shahis of Kabul.

About the time when Lalliya, the Brahman *wazir* of the last Kshatriya king, usurped the throne of Kabul, there reigned in Kashmir a strong ruler named Shankaravarman. His reign lasted from 883 to 902 A.D. Shankaravarman was, as noticed earlier, a sagacious ruler, who made his country great, both militarily and economically. He started many industries and greatly encouraged trade and commerce though he is described also as an oppressive ruler whose exactions from the people as taxes were exhorbitant. One thing very important about him was that he established a direct relation with the common people and talked their language instead of Sanskrit. For all this he is very much criticized and disparaged by Kalhana, the Brahman author of *Rajatarangini*. But by such methods he must have secured a substantial backing from his people. Whether it was for securing markets for the articles of Kashmiri manufacture or simply to win military glory, Shankaravarman went out of Kashmir at the head of a military expedition, and conquered all the neighbouring principalities including Gujrat which, according to *Rajatarangini*, was ruled under the overlordship of Kabul by a king named Ala Khan. Lalliya, the Brahman ruler of Kabul, came to the help of his vassal, Ala Khan, but was defeated and driven out of his own country. The easy victory which the Kashmir ruler Shankaravarman achieved over Lalliya may be attributed to

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the fact that Lalliya was an usurper with no title to the throne, and had therefore struck no deep roots in men's minds, and consequently must have received very little help from the people. But the occupation of Kabul by an outsider stirred the patriotism of the people of Kabul, and a resistance movement was the result. The people of Kabul were then, as they are now, very patriotic and seldom brooked interference from outside. They fought the Arabs and other Muslim rulers from 663 to 1021 A.D., but never accepted their suzerainty. Every student of history knows that during this period of about four hundred years India remained safe from any intrusions or invasions from the north-west. The occupation of Kabul by Shankaravarman only led to a grim struggle which reached its climax during the reign of Gopalavarman (902-904 A.D.) who succeeded Shankaravarman; and another military expedition was sent by the Kashmir ruler under a general named Prabhakaradeva to restore order and tighten the grip. The Kashmiri General though successful did not press his victory too far. He had realized by his experience that the people of Kabul could not be kept for long under subjection. He started negotiations with them and agreed to instal Lalliya's son named Toramana on the Kabul throne. This was done and Toramana ascended the Kabul throne though under a new name or title, Kamaluka, which was given to him by Prabhakaradeva. As already seen, Alberuni in his list of Kabul kings describes him as Kamalu. Henceforth, the relations between Kabul and Kashmir became very cordial, and in course of time marriage relations came to be established between the ruling dynasties of the two countries. This further strengthened the mutual bonds of amity and concord. Kshemagupta, who ruled Kashmir during 951 to 959 A.D., married the grand-daughter of Bhima, who is mentioned by Alberuni as the fourth Brahman king to rule Kabul after

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Lalliya. We have it on the authority of Kalhana that King Bhima came to Kashmir and stayed here for some time, and also built a temple dedicated to Vishnu which was given the name of Bhimakeshava. The dedication of a temple to Vishnu would show that the Hindu Shahis of Kabul were Vaishnavites and not Buddhists as some take pleasure in describing them as such. The temple of Bhimakeshava even now exists in a village now known as Bumzu near Mattan, though as a Muslim *ziarat*, is now known as Ziarat Bam Din Sahib.

The name of Bhima's grand-daughter was Didda who ruled Kashmir after her husband's death as sole sovereign from 980 to 1003 A.D. She appointed her brother's son Sangramaraja as heir to the throne. By now the Turkish king Subaktagin, had occupied Ghazni, and Kabul Shahis came face to face with a rising power which within a short period liquidated the Hindu Shahi rule at Kabul. But the struggle was grim and a stout resistance was offered both by Jaipala, his son Anandapala and his grandson Trilochanapala. It may be that Kashmir also participated in these wars, as Queen Didda of Kashmir was closely related to Jaipala, son of Bhima. *Rajatarangini* is silent on that. But to the final resistance which was organized by the last Shahi king, Trilochanapala, Kashmir also made her contribution. This time Sangramaraja (1003-1028 A.D.). Didda's son, was on the Kashmir throne. The Kashmir ruler sent a well-equipped force under a minister named Tunga. But unfortunately the methods of warfare of Tunga and Trilochanapala were different. Trilochanapala was in favour of using the traditional Kabul methods of warfare which consisted of retiring into mountain fastnesses and therefrom start depredations on the enemy, cutting his line of communications and harrassing his rear. Trilochanapala

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counselled the adoption of such methods. But the Kashmir general who was both vain and inglorious did not pay heed to the advice and came down to the plains and engaged himself in battle with Mahmud. Kalhana gives a graphic description of this battle.[29] He says that Trilochanapala and some Kashmiris of royal blood fought very bravely, but the chances of victory, thanks to the tactical blunder made by Tunga, were remote. The last resistance movement on the Kabul soil was finally crushed. The defeat of Trilochanapala had very far-reaching effects. The Punjab fell an easy victim to Mahmud who occupied it as province. The whole of India now was laid open to any invader who might have chosen to creep in, though for another two centuries no serious invasion was either planned or made.

After the fall of Trilochanapala, his sons, Rudrapala, Diddapala, Kshemapala and Anangapala came to Kashmir and settled here under royal patronage. Here also they distinguished themselves by their deeds of valour. Not long after they settled in Kashmir, the country was attacked by some warlike tribes from the north. All the four Pala brothers took part in the defence of Kashmir and distinguished themselves by their acts of bravery. Thereafter nothing is heard about the descendants of Trilochanapala, except that Harsha, a Kashmir king, was involved in a civil war, and one of his *ranis* who was connected with Trilochanapala, distinguished herself in actual warfare. What type of kings were these great Brahman Shahi rulers of Kabul becomes clear from a remark of Alberuni who says:

> The Hindu Shahiya dynasty is now extinct and of the whole house there is no longer the slightest remnant in

29. Kalhana, VII. 53ff.

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> existence. We must say that in all their grandeur, they never slackened in the ardent desire of doing that which is good and right, that they were men of noble sentiment and noble bearing.[30]

Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini* expresses grief over the fall of Trilochanapala in the following pathetic words:

> We have described the prosperity of the Shahi country during the days of Shankaravarman. Now we think in our minds with great grief, where is the Shahi dynasty with its ministers, its kings, its great grandeur? Did it exist really or did it not? Tunga returned to his own country Kashmir, totally defeated and left the whole Bharata land open to the descent of the Turushkas.[31]

Kalhana further expresses his anguish in these words:

> The very name of the splendour of Shahi kings has vanished. What is not seen in dream, what even our imagination cannot conceive, that destiny accomplishes with ease.[32]

30. Sachau, p. 194.
31. Kalhana, VII. 68-70.
32. Kalhana, VII. 66-7.

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2
ADVENT OF ISLAM

WRITING ABOUT the people of Kashmir, Alberuni says that the people of Kashmir

> are particularly anxious about the actual strength of their country, and therefore take always much care to keep a stronghold upon the entrances and roads leading into it. In consequence, it is very difficult to have any commerce with them... at present they do not allow any Hindu whom they do not know personally to enter, much less other people.[1]

The invasions of Mahmud shook the Indian soil to its depths, and though he failed to occupy Kashmir, his invasion made the Kashmiris quite vigilant for their national defence. The Punjab was occupied by Mahmud. The threat of Muslim invasion was always present. Consequently, they did not allow any foreigner to come in and kept the country closed to all the outside world, at least for the time being. But such a state of affairs could not continue for long. The trading classes, both merchants and manufacturers, who had carried on a brisk trade with the Punjab, were hard hit by their isolation from external markets, and a general unrest, particularly in the cities was the outcome. The working classes in the cities were without employment, and the peasantry sullen and resentful because of the prevailing turmoil. They greatly added to the unrest as already depicted in the preceding chapter. Such a state of affairs lasted upto

1. Sachau, pp. 99-100.

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the reign of Suhadeva (1301-1320 A.D.). The rigidity observed in the time of Alberuni did not last for long, and as we have already seen, the coming of the Muslims was at times encouraged by the country's rulers to serve as a safety valve between themselves and the other warring classes. But this infiltration of foreigners did not mend matters. The Punjab was unsettled and as trade with it was negligible, there was poverty and consequent unrest. Agriculture was at a standstill and the peasantry was starving. What was required was a powerful hand that could restore peace and prosperity to the realm. During Suhadeva's reign many foreigners, mainly Muslims, came into Kashmir. The chief amongst them was a Muslim missionary [Sayyid Sharf-ud-Din] popularly known as Bulbul Shah, who converted Rin chen, a Tibetan prince settled as a refugee in Kashmir, where he became king later. He was followed by (Sultan Hassan Shah Mir from Iraq) Shah Mir who came in 1313 A.D. along with his numerous relations.[2] Suhadeva received him well for being the son of a renowned Muslim divine, and bestowed a *jagir* upon him. Lankar Chak, an adventurer, also came during Suhadeva's reign and settled in Kashmir under his patronage. Things went on thus, when a terrific catastrophe swept over the country which developed a crisis of a far reaching character, sufficient to pave the path for the epoch-making changes that followed the event. Dul chu,[3] a Tartar chief invaded Kashmir with an army of seventy thousand strong. Suhadeva fled towards Kishtwar leaving his kingdom to the tender mercies of the merciless invader. Dul chu ordered a massacre. Thousands were killed, more were sold as slaves to Tartar

2. Pir Hassan Shah, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir,* Vol. I, pp. 314,429-30; Dutt, Jogesh Chander (tr.), *The Rajataragini of Jonaraja*, p.15.
3. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. I, p.318 f.n., 476; Dutt, Jogesh Chander p.16.

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merchants who had accompanied him. Towns were set in fire, standing crops were destroyed and having stayed here for about eight months Dul chu took about fifty thousand Brahmans with him as slaves only to perish with all the troops and slaves while crossing Devasar pass.[4]

Dul chu went away from the country. But his visit had upset the whole social and economic fabric of the country. People were in distress. Lawlessness was rampant, and marauding bands infested the highways. The people lost all faith in their ruler. All they wanted was a strong ruler who could establish peace with a resolute will. Such one they found in Rin chen, who had previously repulsed an attack of the Khasha tribe, where he showed a great deal of military prowess and valour. Without any serious opposition, he seized the rule of the country, though Ramachandra, the commander-in-chief of the late king, put in a feeble resistance, but was later defeated and killed. This created not a ripple in the populace, anywhere, and Rin chen became the undisputed monarch. Things got settled so much that, not long after Rin chen married the daughter of Ramachandra. His son Ravanachandra was raised to a very high position in the State and all seemed well for the time being. Rin chen was very much impressed by the sad spectacle of warring sects and creeds that were present in Kashmir. He wanted to establish a uniform faith in the country with himself as its head. He was a nominal Buddhist and tried to get himself initiated into the Brahmanical fold.[5] But the Brahmans who were always jealous of sharing their privileges with an outsider, the privileges which in spite of various vicissitudes they went through they had largely preserved, did not favour his

4. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. I, p. 495.
5. Dutt, Jogesh Chander pp.16-19; Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. I, pp.428-29.

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initiation into their fold.[6] The result was that he embraced Islam at the hands of Bulbul Shah, a Muslim missionary, to whom reference has been already made, and who continued to stay in Kashmir. Thus we see that in order to preserve their class ascendency by refusing the outsider Rin chen's admission to their fold, the Brahmans not only destroyed their own ascendency but spelt ruin to their very existence as we shall see in the following pages. The unsettled condition of the times, brought about by various factors briefly dealt with above, had prepared the people for very big changes. With Rin chen's conversion who now took the Islamic name of Malik Sadar-ud-Din, Ravanachandra and many others with him accepted Islam. Thus a Muslim ruling class sprang into existence. This class also needed support, and they used various methods for the spread of their faith. The simple tenets of Islam backed by official support gained many adherents from the lower castes. Only the Brahmans put a brave front.

Rin chen died in the year 1326 A.D. He left behind his widow Kota Rani and a minor son Haider Shah who, on account of his minority, was not considered for kingship. Uddyanadeva, the brother of Suhadeva, who had fled during Dul chu's attack and was staying at Swatgar, was brought back from his voluntary exile and was installed upon the throne. Kota Rani married him. The real power remained, however, in the hands of Kota Rani. She appointed Bikhshana Bhatta and Shah Mir as the prime minister and the commander-in-chief respectively. By such means Kota Rani tried to give satisfaction to all the classes. But this arrangement could not last for long. As ill-luck would have it, again another Tartar chief named Arwan or Archalla, made

6. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. I, p.429.

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an attack upon Kashmir with his Tartar hordes. Uddyanadeva, as was customary with the family, fled this time to Tibet. But Kota Rani stirred the local patriotism of the Kashmiris by an impassioned appeal. The people in thousands gathered under her banner and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Tartars. Kashmir was freed from danger.[7] Uddyanadeva, came back to rule, and Shah Mir who distinguished himself while defending the country, rose very high in the esteem of the people. His sons Jamshed and Alla-ud-Din were appointed to very high and responsible posts and he himself was greatly honoured by the *rani*. Uddyanadeva died in the year 1341 A.D. leaving behind him a minor son and Kota Rani his widow. At this time began the real struggle between militant Islam and tolerant but static Hinduism of the day. Kota Rani represented the latter and Shah Mir became the rallying point of the forces of Islam. Kota Rani tried to establish herself on the throne, but was defeated by Shah Mir who mounted the throne and became the progenitor of a long line of kings known as Salatins. These Salatins ruled Kashmir for more than two hundred years. Thus ended the Hindu rule, not as a result of foreign aggression, as in the case of the neighbouring province of the Punjab, but as a result of a long chain of events briefly surveyed above.

7. Fauq, Munshi Muhammad-ud Din, *History of Kashmir.*

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3
SPREAD OF ISLAM

SHAH MIR Ascended the throne in the year 1343 A.D., and made a promising good start. He paid his first attention to the improvement of agriculture, and the lot of the peasantry. The land revenue was reduced to one fifth of the gross produce. Law and order was established with an iron hand and roads were made safe for travel. Lavanyas, a Rajput clan which had acquired a lot of power and influence in the prevailing turmoil of the unsettled times, betrayed an amount of restiveness but were soon crushed, and, in their stead, Chaks and Magreys, two influential clans were brought to prominence. By such methods, Shah Mir strengthened and consolidated his rule. Islam now was the court religion, but the administration continued in the hands of the traditional official class, the Brahmans. With them the change of religion offered no advantages and the retention of the old creed no loss of status, and they continued to follow their old religion. Sanskrit was the official language and the people conducted their writing work in this language.[1] But a number of Muslim preachers now began to pour into Kashmir from Hamdan; prominent amongst them were a number of Sayyids, most of whom had left their country for fear of molestation from Taimur any time. Some of these Sayyids had come to visit Kashmir even before the establishment of the Muslim rule, notable amongst them being Bulbul Shah, who was responsible for the conversion of Rin chen. His original name

1. Stein, M. A., *Kalhana's Rajataranjini*, Vol. I, Intro p.130.

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is said to be Sayyid Abdul Rahman, though some call him Sayyid Sharf-ud-Din or Sharaf-ud-Din Sayyid Abdul Rahman Turkistani. This much is certain that he was a Sayyid of Turkistan and was a disciple of Shah Niyamat Ullah Wali, a Khalifa of Suhrawardi Tariks (a Sufi sect). He paid his first visit to Kashmir in the reign of Simhadeva (1286-1301), but returned soon. Next time we find him again in Kashmir, and this time he effected the conversion of Rin chen Shah, re-christened him as Sadar-ud-Din under circumstances that have already been referred to. With the establishement of the Muslim rule other notable Sayyids began to pour into the country. Bulbul Shah was followed by Sayyid Jalal-ud-Din of Bukhara and Sayyid Taj-ud-Din, the cousin of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani (Shah Hamdan). Sayyid Taj-ud-Din was accompanied by his two disciples Sayyid Masud and Sayyid Yusuf. There also came Sayyid Hussain Simnani the younger brother of Sayyid Taj-ud-Din. It is said that Sayyid Taj-ud-Din and Sayyid Hussain Simnani came to Kashmir under instructions from Sayyid Mir Ali Hamdani to find if the country could give them protection against the attacks of Taimur, who was suspected of contemplating a wholesale massacre of the entire lot of the Sayyids.[2] Sayyid Mir Ali Hamdani himself came to Kashmir. It is said that with Sayyid Mir Ali Hamdani about seven hundred Sayyids came, and with his illustrious son three hundred more. They stayed in Kashmir under royal protection and took to the proselytization of the local people. They secured many converts to the new faith. Islam having become the court religion, it was but natural that some privileged position was guaranteed to its votaries. This created repercussions in the Hindu mind, who saw before their very eyes a deterioration in their former

2. Fauq, *History of Kashmir.*

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position. In the reign of Shahab-ud-Din (1360-1378 A.D.) the resentment in men's minds took a practical shape. A feeble rising on behalf of the Brahmans was the result. The other castes do not seem to have participated in the rising in any large numbers. The king, in order to break the upheaval amongst the Hindus, turned his attention towards their temples which must have provided a meeting place for them. Hassan, the Kashmiri historian, says that almost all the temples in Srinagar including the one at Bijbehara were greatly damaged. It seems that the kings of Kashmir had by now become completely Muslimized as a result of their contacts with the Sayyids. They began to feel that consolidation of their rule depended wholly upon extirpation of all traces of opposition, religious or political.

As already stated, the Hindus could not look with any amount of equanimity upon the drastic changes that swept in the body politic of their country. Resentment must have been there. Some stuck to their old religion in spite of many difficulties they had to face, but there were many others who either by conviction or in order to gain royal favour changed their religion. The new converts came to be looked down by their old compatriots as people with no decency or loyalty for their time-honoured values. This created a new struggle between these two classes. In the reign of Sikandar, one Suha Bhatta, who after his conversion took the Islamic name of Saif-ud-Din, became the leader of the new converts. Besides, he was the king's chief minister. Both Sikandar and Saif-ud-Din planned the extirpation of the Hindus and obliteration of all traces of Hinduism from Kashmir. Saif-ud-Din had his own axe to grind but Sikandar wanted thereby to consolidate and strengthen his rule. The methods adopted by Sikandar in this behalf may well be given in the words of Hassan. After having described the great homage paid by Sikandar to Mir

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Muhammad Hamdani, at whose bidding he constructed a *khanakah* (now known as Khanaka-i-Maula), on the site of an old temple called Kali Shri, Hassan says:

> this country possessed from the times of Hindu Rajas many temples which were like the wonders of the world. Their workmanship was so fine and delicate that one found himself bewildered at their sight. Sikandar goaded by feelings of bigotry destroyed them and levelled them with the earth and with their material built many mosques and khanakahs. In the first instance he turned his attention towards the Martanda temple built by Rama Deva[3] on Mattan Karewa. For one full year he tried to demolish it but failed. At last in sheer dismay he dug out stones from its base and having stored enough wood in their place set fire to it. The gold gilt paintings on its walls were totally destroyed and the walls surrounding its premises were demolished. Its ruins even now strike wonder in men's minds. At Bijbehara three hundred temples including the famous Vijayeshwara temple which was partially damaged by Shahab-ud-Din were destroyed and with the material of the latter a mosque was built and on its site a khanakah which is even now known as Vijayeshwar Khanakah.[4]

After having described the destruction of many temples the ruins of which even now bespeak a fully developed architectural grandeur and massiveness. Hassan further says that:

> Sikandar meted out greatest oppression to the Hindus. It was notified in the city that if a Hindu does not become a Muslim, he must leave the country or be killed. As a result, some of the Hindus fled away, some accepted

3. The temple in the present form was built by Lalitaditya during the 8th century A. D.
4. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. I, pp. 392-94; also see pp. 385-90;Vol. II, pp. 178-79.

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> Islam and many Brahmans consented to be killed and gave their lives. It is said that Sikandar collected by these methods about three *khirwars* (six maunds) of sacred threads (from Hindu converts) and burnt them. Hazarat Amir Kabir who was witness to all this orgy of brute passion and vandalism at last advised him to desist from the slaughter of Brahmans, and told him to impose *jazia* instead of death upon them. All the Hindu books of learning were collected and thrown into Dal lake and were buried beneath stones and earth.[5]

Governmental coercion, coupled with brisk proselytising activities indulged in by the Muslim preachers, and also the privileged position which the fresh converts secured, succeeded in bringing about a mass conversion. Sikandar himself was fired with a zeal to change the character of his rule into a purely Islamic administration and a considerable advance was made in this direction. He fully believed that the danger to the infant State was only from the Hindus. That danger had to be eliminated by any method. Hence the persecution of the Hindus.

Sikandar in spite of all this had his virtues. He was a great patron of Islamic learning, though he had an equal hatred for the Hindu lore. He introduced many social reforms. He forbade sale and distillation of wines, suttee, gambling, prostitution and even music, and remitted many taxes though, after having almost finished them, he allowed the remaining Hindus to live only on payment of *jazia*.

Sikandar was succeeded by his son Ali Shah who also appointed Saif-ud-Din [Suha Bhatta] as his prime minister. In his short reign of about six years the persecution of the Hindus continued with greater vigour. Ali Shah appears to

5. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. I, p. 180; Fauq, *History of Kashmir.*

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have been a weakling and an incompetent ruler during whose reign some outlying districts changed masters. Saif-ud-Din his minister was at one with him for bringing about the annihilation of the Hindu population. Jonaraja in his history gives a graphic description of the plight of the Brahmans in the reign of Ali Shah. Says he:

> ... Suha passed the limit by levying fine on the twice born... this evil-minded man forbade ceremonies and processions on the new moon. He became envious and apprehended that the twice-born who had become fearless would keep up their caste by going over to foreign countries he therefore ordered all the guards on the roads not to allow passage to any one without a passport. Then as the fisherman torments fish, so this low born man tormented the twice-born in this country. The Brahmans burnt themselves in the flaming fire through fear of conversion. Some Brahmans killed themselves by means of poison, some by the rope, others by drowning themselves... others again by falling from a precipice... The country was contaminated by hatred and the king's favourite (Suha) could not prevent one in a thousand from committing suicide... A multitude of Brahmans who prided on their caste fled from the country through bye-roads, as the main roads were closed, even as men flee under ground when the doors of their houses are closed. Even as men depart from this world, so did the Brahmans flee to foreign countries, the son leaving his father behind and the father leaving his son... The difficult country through which they passed, the scanty food, painful illness and the torments of hell during life time removed from the minds of the Brahmans the fears of hell. Oppressed by various calamities, such as encounter with the enemy, fear of snakes, fierce heat and scanty food, many Brahmans perished on the way and thus obtained relief.

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> Where was then their bath, their meditation, their austerity and where were then their prayers ?[6]

The persecution of the Hindus or more particularly of the Brahmans has been borne as testimony by almost all the Muslim historians. Hassan and Fauq, two great Muslim historians, have condemned these excesses in unscathing terms. But it cannot be denied that the struggle had both an economic and political background, though it took the form of religious persecution. As already stated, a number of Sayyids came over to Kashmir. They had the blessings and leadership of Amir Kabir Shah Hamdan (Mir Ali Hamdani) and his illustrious son Mir Muhammad, who had great influence over the then Muslim rulers, Qutub-ud-Din and Sikandar. The Sayyids achieved great influence, and the prominent amongst them established propaganda centres where meals were distributed free and people were initiated into the cult of Islam.[7] It becomes evident that a Muslim Brahman class (Sayyids) came into existence as against the Hindu Brahman class. The Sayyids now performed the duties which were more or less once performed by the Brahmans. The income which once went to the Brahmans, went now to the Sayyids, and the influence which they once wielded at the royal court came now to be exercised by the Sayyids. A struggle was inevitable. The Sayyid saw a potential danger in the Brahman in whose rehabilitation he saw his own disaster. With the aid and support of the government he wrought his destruction. The Sayyids were a source of great strength for the rulers themselves. They became the king's party. They not only made additions to the loyal bands of

6. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, pp. 65-66; Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 186; Fauq, *History of Kashmir.*
7. Sufi, G. M. D., *Kashir,* Vol. I, p. 89.

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'faithful', but also kept a refractory populace under check by preaching that a Muslim ruler partook of the halo of divinity. But the Brahman with a tenacity seldom witnessed at any other place stuck to his gun. Unmindful of the gains that would have accrued to him by change of religion, and destitute, forlorn, hunted and homeless though he became as a result of his refusal to change his faith, the Brahman did not lose courage. Some of them were forcibly converted, some fled from the country, many more committed suicide, and those that remained in the country went about in disguise from place to place. Though, as we have already seen, Sikandar tried to destroy the whole of their literature, yet he failed very miserably. These Brahmans lost their temples, their homes, their kith and kin, their means of livelihood, but they did not mind it. On the contrary, even in their miserable plight they did not forget their rich treasures which linked them with the past. They felt that they were the custodians of their past cultural heritage - the illuminating treatises on the wonderous Shaiva philosophy, and other great works on literature, art, music, grammar and medicine - works which have excited the wonder of an admiring world; and wherever they went they carried these treasures with them. Judging from the depth of thought displayed in these works that have been preserved, their high literary merit, their insight into the depth of human nature, their poetical flights, their emotional fervour coupled with an incisive logical treatment of various subjects dealt in them, one can easily imagine the colossal loss to which the world has been subjected to by the acts of vandalism which resulted in the destruction of hundreds of other works which contained the labours of more than two thousand years. The tradition is that once only eleven families of the Brahmans remained, the rest were killed, committed suicide, went about in disguise, or left the country for good.

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But all traces of life were not extinct in the Brahmans. In the closing years of Ali Shah's reign the Brahmans began to come out of their hiding. On the advice of Mir Muhammad the king allowed them to live on payment of *jazia*. Those who could pay were given a respite and under the leadership of one Ratnakara who somehow or the other ingratiated himself into the favours of Saif-ud-Din, the chief minister, they started to organize themselves. But the other side looked with great disfavour upon the Brahmans trying to rehabilitate themselves, and upon the advice of a Muslim divine who is named in the Hindu chronicles as Malan-ud-Din, Ratnakara was imprisoned and the Brahmans again went back to wilderness.[8]

The reign of Ali Shah covers a brief span of six years. But during this short time lawlessness was the order of the day. The edifice built by Shah Mir was tottering. Some of the outlying districts ceased to hold allegiance to the central authority. Trade dwindled and the time-honoured industries which had won a name for Kashmir were in a state of decay. Thousands of people were uprooted. They went from place to place spreading disaffection and resentment. But a change for the better was soon to be witnessed.

8. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, pp. 67-68.

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4
THE PANDIT REBORN

ALI SHAH could not maintain himself long on the throne. He had stuck no deep roots among the people. The bulk of the people was subjected to a forcible conversion, and though later on they reconciled themselves to the inevitable, yet for the time being the wound was fresh and the resentment alive. There were many others who, though not converted dragged their miserable existence either by paying *jazia* or by passing their days in disguise. The result was a universal discontent. Whatever stung by remorse for his own misdeeds or for the mere love of travel, Ali Shah planned a pilgrimage to the holy places of Islam, but on reaching Jammu he changed his mind on the advice of the king of that place and he returned to Kashmir with a considerable force supplied to him by the latter. He had appointed his younger brother Shahi Khan to act on his behalf in his absence. Shahi Khan came out to meet him, but was defeated by the superior forces of Ali Shah. Ali Shah again ascended the throne, but was soon defeated by Shahi Khan, who occupied the throne and took the title of Zain-ul-abidin. That Shahi Khan should have won an easy victory shows that Ali Shah, the rightful sovereign had lost the confidence of the people.

Shahi Khan, now known as Zain-ul-abidin, opened a new chapter in the annals of Muslim Kashmir. From tenth century onwards and even earlier the Muslims, particularly the Arabs, had almost monopolized the trade in the East. Arab ships went as far as China and Japan. In the fourteenth century these traders had established their colonies in South India,

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Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, and even in China.[1] Their contacts with races and religions other than their own had widened their outlook. The enormous gains which they reaped from their trade abroad made them keep their countries open for non-Muslim traders too. Fresh ideas poured into the Muslim lands. With the free flow of idea which now broke through the iron ring of strict isolation, it was but natural that the governments too in most Muslim countries became very tolerant. Poets and philosophers with a radical outlook came into being and, inspite of the rigidity of the Muslim Code, there came about a revolution in men's minds. Kashmir also shared the spirit of the age. In the reign of Zain-ul-abidin trade and commerce flourished. Kashmiri traders went as far as Turkey, and with them came new ideas and many learned men. Zain-ul-abidin with his receptive mind fully partook of this new spirit and became very tolerant. He turned his attention to the establishment of real peace in the country. He dealt with lawless elements with an iron hand, and strengthened the defences of the frontiers. This gave a great deal of encouragement to trade, and with the establishment of safe communications learned people and traders and industrialists from all over Asia began coming over to the country. Many industries were started and above all agriculture was made a special concern of the State. Gigantic irrigation schemes were undertaken and completed which exist to the present day. Wherever one may go in Kashmir, he will, inspite of the passing of five centuries, come across with the name of this king. Zainagir, Zainapur, Zainadub, Zaina Lank, Zaina Ganga and Zaina Kadal bear eloquent testimony to the great and glorious rule of this king.

1. Husain, Mahdi (tr), *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, p. 188.

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It has already been noticed that the Hindu population was totally uprooted. An overwhelming majority of the people was converted forcibly, though many were such who accepted the new creed with their free will. A good number of the Brahmans had left the country and many more were passing their days in ignominy and wretchedness only on payment of *jazia*. But they could not openly declare themselves as Hindus nor could they affix their Hindu mark (*tilaka*) on their foreheads, much less could they pray in their temples or perform any religious ceremony. But with Zain-ul-abidin coming to power the Brahmans got a respite. Again we find them practising some arts, notably medicine. In this useful art they had achieved mastery from times immemorial,[2] and they had maintained it in spite of the vicissitudes of times through which they had to pass. Their fame began to re-assert itself, and in course of time it reached the royal ears as well. Zain-ul-abidin got a poisonous boil which gave him much trouble. The court physicians tried their skill but failed. Jonaraja the historian says:

> As flowers are not obtainable in the month of Magha on account of the mischief caused by snow, even so physicians who knew about poisons could not, at that time, be found in the country, owing to Governmental oppression. The servants of the king at last found out Shribhatta who knew the antidotes of poisons... He was well-versed in the art of healing, but out of fear... for a long time, delayed to come. When he arrived, the king gave him encouragement and he completely cured the king of the poisonous boil.[3]

2. Caraka, the renowned authority on medicine, was a Brahman of Kashmir.
3. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, pp. 81-82.

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The king wanted to make munificent gifts to Shri Bhatta. But the latter refused to accept any. When pressed hard, he made a request which was to the effect that *jazia* on the Brahmans be remitted, and opportunities be assured to them to develop their mental and moral resources without any let or hinderance. The selflessness displayed by the physician Shri Bhatta had its effect upon the mind of the king. The request was accepted and *jazia* was remitted. The Brahman was freed from the position of inferiority to which he was relegated by the previous kings.[4]

Shri Bhatta's selflessness and the acceptance of his request by the king proved a land-mark in the history of Hinduism in Kashmir. His attitude shows that the will to live as a group by themselves was very predominant amongst the Brahmans which was shared by Shri Bhatta in an equal measure with the whole lot of them. Freed from the shackles of *jazia* and other handicaps, the Brahmans started their own reorganization and rehabilitation. By now the Persian had become the official language. The desire to share office with others could not be fulfilled without knowing Persian. The Brahmans who were popularly known as Bhattas took to the study of Persian and in a brief span of few years they acquired mastery over this language. But the Sanskrit learning and their religious ceremonies were not forgotten because this was the only distinctive feature to keep them alive as a distinct group. There was now practically only one caste, that of the Brahmans, which represented Hinduism in Kashmir. From this did not "Lords Spiritual and Temporal" again take their birth, just as in the past the Lords Spiritual and Temporal sprang out of the populace. The caste was divided further

4. Fauq, *Shabab-i-Kashmir* (Life of Zain-ul-abidin).

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into two sub-castes, the *Karkuns* and the *Bhasha Bhatta* or *Bhacha Bhat*, the former included amongst its fold those who studied Persian and entered government services and the latter those who studied *bhasha*, i.e., Sanskrit and took charge of the religious affairs of the community. But how was the division of labour to be made? It was decided that the daughter's son of a person should be made a *Bhasha Bhatta* to administer to the religious needs of his maternal grandfather's family. The arrangement was simple enough as it began involving no loss of status to the *Bhasha Bhatta,* but in course of time this arrangement became responsible for the creation of two distinct classes with a distinctive culture and mode of life and habits, with the result that though there is no legal or religious bar, yet the two classes seldom intermarry these days. In the beginning, the *Bhasha Bhattas* prided themselves at having been given the exalted position of the custodian of the religion and learning of the country, and may be they were looked at with great esteem and regard by the *Karkuns*. But for his maintenance, the *Bhasha Bhatta* was dependent upon the *Karkuns*. In course of time they lost their importance. The rise and fall of the *Karkun* made a corresponding increase or decrease in *Basha Bhatta's* economic position. Gradually the majority of the *Bhasha Bhattas* became like the parts of a soul-less machine destined to perform ceremonies in a mechanical manner in lieu of a pittance they eked out of the munificence of the *Karkuṇ*, but some of them maintained their highest traditions, and their fame for great learning and culture resounded far and wide. But socially, due to their economic dependence upon them, in course of time they came to be looked down by the *Karkuns*. Thus the Kashmiri Pandit took birth in his modern shape, though till then the name 'Kashmiri Pandit' was not coined for this community which was described as Bhatta. Even

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now a Kashmiri Pandit at home describes himself as a Bhatta, and it is by this name that he is described also by others in Kashmir.

Having cured the king and refused to accept a reward, Shri Bhatta rose very high in the official favour. He was made the court physician and *afsar-ul-ataba,* the head of the Medical Department.[5] His influence both with the king and his own people was great. This influence he utilized in the rehabilitation of his people. The king was all prepared for this. He wanted peace and prosperity. Jonaraja says:

> As the lion does not attack other animals in the hermitage of saints, so the Turushkas, who were very much alarmed, did not now oppress the Brahmans as they had done before. Brilliant as the sun, the king bestowed his favours on men of merit (Brahmans) whose very existence had been endangered...[6]

The result was that many Brahmans who were forcibly converted during previous times were reconverted without any molestation. Those who had fled away came back in large numbers. The king gave them rent free lands and also invited a number of Brahmans from Jagannath and *yogis* from Kurukshetra. The Brahmans were free to practise their religion, and some temples that were damaged during the previous rule were repaired. Sanskrit books that were destroyed were sent for from India.[7] Many Sanskrit books were translated into Persian and similarly Persian books into

5. Fauq, *Shabab-i-Kashmir.* (*Afsar-ul-ataba* might mean the minister for health).
6. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 77.
7. Fauq, *Shabab-i-Kashmir.*

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Sanskrit. A free kitchen was established for *yogis*[8] and other *sanyasis*, and *pathshalas* were established for the propogation of Sanskrit learning. In short, no stone was left unturned in giving fullest relief to the Brahmans.[9] No wonder that the Sultan came to be known and is even now known as Bhatta Shah i.e., the king of Bhattas. The Brahmanas repaired to the Sultan's court with their petty grievances and complaints, and like the Hindu kings of old, the Sultan listened and redressed them. In Zainapur and Zainagir rent free lands were given to them.

The Brahman, the Pandit or the Bhatta proved a source of great strength to the Sultan. In intellectual field he enriched his court, and in the land assessment work his services were unique. The land settlement records were placed in charge of and prepared by the Brahmans. The village administration was totally in the Brahman's hands. Being the only literate person in the village he was a useful member of the village community. This accounts for the existence of Pandits though in very small numbers in villages with a predominant Muslim population in spite of the vicissitudes through which he had to pass in course of centuries that rolled by from the time Zain-ul-abdin held sway. Their aptitude for literary pursuits, took them to study Persian and within a short time acquiring a sound and workable knowledge of the language made their entry into subordinate services both easy and possible. Jonaraja and Shrivara, the two Hindu chroniclers, have bestowed unbounded praise upon the Sultan for his open favour for the Brahmans and their sacred books. A sort of Research Department was established which performed the

8. Even now a mohalla of Srinagar (in Rainawari area) is known as Jogi Lankar or Jogi Langar.
9. Fauq, *Shabab-i-Kashmir..*

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task of translating Sanskrit books into Persian and *vice versa.* This opened the portals of Sanskrit learning to the Muslim savants and the Brahmans themselves learnt Persian and Arabic. Both the communities came to respect the learning of each other. A new culture now began to grow, which was the outcome of a synthesis in the mode of thought and way of life followed by the two communities. Saints and sages now appeared who preached oneness of God and brotherhood of his creatures. Common places of worship sprang into existence where both the Brahman and the Sheikh prayed. A common poetry sprang up in Kashmiri language which was sung by both the Hindus and Muslims. The language was beautified further by an admixture of Sanskrit and Persian words used to describe the highest ideas pertaining to the mystic faith which all of them shared copiously. In spite of the constant changes which took place on the political horizon after Zain-ul-abidin's reign, there came about little change in the life of the people.

At the top of it, many Kashmiri Brahmans came to prominance. Some of them were in constant attendance on the Sultan whom they described in their writings as *suratrana shri jainulavedena.*[10] He listened with great pleasure to the recitations from the *Nilamata Purana* and other *shastras* such as *Yogavasishta.* Shrivara the historian says:

> The king heard me recite the *Vasishtha Brahmadarshana* [*Yogavasistha*] and *Ramayana,* composed by Valmiki which is known as the way to salvation; and when he heard the annotations pervaded by a feeling of tranquility, he remembered them even in his dreams...[11]

10. Sanskritized form of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin.
11. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, pp. 145-146; [Dhar, Kashi Nath (tr.), *Shrivara's Zaina Rajatarangini,* I. V. 80-81].

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The influence of these Brahmans was so great that he forbade the killing of fish in certain tanks and even stopped cow killing,[12] and also meat eating on some days. No wonder that a Muslim historian deplores that "the king imported back all the practices of the infidels which were once banished from his land."[13] But the king, unmindful of the Muslim historian, trod the path which led to his eternal credit and greatness of the country.

In his reign the country witnessed unprecedented prosperity. Agriculture reached its highest peak. The produce was so much that it was never witnessed since, not even under the glorious rule of the Moghuls. The produce of *shali* alone was 77 lacs of *khirwars* (i.e. 154 lacs of maunds). The land settlement including agriculture was under the charge of the Brahmans as already noted above. For these operations the country was divided into two provinces. Each province was placed in charge of a *qanungo*, whose duty it was to look after the general welfare of irrigation and to prepare settlement records. Pandit Madhava Kaul, was put in charge of the northern province and Pandit Ganesha Kaul was in charge of the southern. They both were responsible to an interprovincial head known as *sadar qanungo* named Pandit Gopal Kaul.[14] Under their supervision huge irrigation schemes were undertaken. Lal Kuhl, Shah Kuhl exist even today and feed thousands of acres of land. As was but natural, these three Brahmans recruited on subordinate posts of *patwaris* and others, men from their own community. The *patwaris* prepared village records. This class of *patwaris* lives upto

12. Fauq, *Shabab-i-Kashmir.*
13. Khanyari, Mulla Baha-ud-Din, *Lulb-ut-Tawarikh* (quoted by Fauq in *Shabab-i-Kashmir*).
14. Fauq, *Shabab-i-Kashmir.*

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this date. They have been holding these posts in heredity, the son following the father and so on. Sultans came and Sultans went, some of them cruel, harsh and oppressive to the Brahmans now known as Pandits, but the Pandit *patwari* on account of the usefulness of his job was left unmolested. There were many other Pandits who filled the ministerial ranks or waited upon the king as courtiers. The notable amongst them was Shri Bhatta himself. He was the head of the State physicians and held a ministerial rank. The Sultan was highly kind to him. As already seen, Shri Bhatta was indeed a deserving person. Shrivara the historian writes that it was due to Shri Bhatta that the Brahmans rose high. About him it is stated that:

> Shri Bhatta was a *wazir* of the king and was very high in his favours. On his death the Sultan not only expressed his great sorrow but settled an early endowment of one crore dinars on his sons.[15]

A short description of the Pandits who rose high in his reign may not be out of place. Shiva Bhatta, Tilaka, and Simha the astrologer held high ranks. So did Tilakacharya, a great Buddhist scholar. Shiva Bhatta Pandit was a very high dignitary and held a very high and distinguished position at the court. He built large *maths* in various localities, and was, besides, in charge of the Translation Department. He was greatly gifted for this job on account of his mastery of both Sanskrit and Persian languages. He wrote exquisite poetry in Kashmiri language and was well-versed in Persian and Tibetan languages besides Sanskrit. He was the author of a book, *Jaina caritra*, which gives an account of the Sultan's reign. He was a skilful musician and has written a book on this

15. De, B. (tr.), *Tabaqat-i-Akbari,* Vol. 3, p.650.

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subject. He translated many Persian books into Sanskrit. The *Mahabharata* and *Rajatarangini* were for the first time translated into Persian under his supervision and direction. He was a great favourite of the king. Sumitra Bhatta was an astrologer of repute who also was in constant attendance at the court. Rupya Bhatta was another astrologer very much honoured by the king about whom it is recorded that

> Rupyabhatta could without the labour of calculation, but by merely observing the course of the planets in the past year, know their position in the year to come[16]

Karpura Bhatta was a physician of renown to avail of whose treatment men from distant lands came to Kashmir. Shri Ramananda, the renowned scholar of his time wrote an exposition of *Mahabhashya.* Yodha Bhatta was a great poet in Kashmiri language. He wrote *Jaina prakasha* and presented it to the king who "in token of his appreciation bestowed many favours on him". Bhattavatara (or Bhodi Bhatta) as others calls him was a great favourite of the king. He had committed to memory the whole of the *Shah nama* for which the king had a great liking. The duty of Bhattavatara was to recite *Shah nama* for the delectation of the king. It is said that the king got unbounded pleasure from his recitations. This man was a great musician and wrote a treatise on music. Rupya Bhanda was in charge of the palace decorations and Jaya Bhatta maintained the king's private accounts, and the charities were distributed through him. Jonaraja and Shrivara were two historians. The former assisted the Sultan as an assessor in deciding the cases laid before him. Shrivara was a great musician who was very much in the king's favour.

16. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 83.

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There were other Pandits also who were given strictly confidential diplomatic missions to execute. In short, the Pandits carved for themselves a place in the body politic.[17]

In the foregoing pages we have seen as to how the Pandits again reorganized and rehabilitated themselves. They studied Persian and, in a short period of a few years, they acquired a mastery over this language, and by their useful services they acquired an influence and prestige which put them on par with any favoured class in the realm. It is evident that the atrocities which were perpetraded on them during the previous rules had not robbed them of their stamine. They possessed it in abundant measure. Those who could not withstand the trials to which time put them changed their faith but those who persisted and went through the ordeals of fire and death came out unscathed and with their stamina undiminished. Zain-ul-abdin breathed his last in the year 1474 A.D. Though with his passing away the Pandits lost much of their prestige yet the structure of the society which they had built during his benevolent rule lasted for long and provided them shelter during the vicissitudes that befell them during their chequered career. The vicissitudes they had to go through were numerous, and these almost brought them to the brink of destruction, but they survived and survive till today.

17. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, pp. 83,94-95, 97, 135-136; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, I.I. 117-118; I.IV. 34-39].

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5
PANDITS DURING THE LATER SALATINS

HAIDER SHAH now ascended the throne. Though he ruled for a brief period of one year and a few months, yet he upset the base which provided strength to his father's rule. Himself he was a man of weak temper, easily inflamed and addicted to drinking and other evil habits. His drunken orgies lasted for days together. Culturally he was degraded and with no education worth the name except some knowledge of music. Haider Shah avoided the company of civilized people, and got himself surrounded by a coterie of immoral people who egged him on his disasterous course of drinking and other debaucheries. A barber named Purni (or Luli as Muslim historians call him) became a great favourite of the king. He gathered much power in his hands, and played a prominent part in the drama of what was to be enacted in near future. During Haider Shah's reign, the Pandits suffered immensely. The reason for this is not a mystery. During his father's reign the Pandits were resurrected and resuscitated and placed on a high pedestal. They were in constant attendance on the late king and influenced him greatly. The result of all this was that a group of upper class Muslims who failed to share the spirit of times, came to look with a great disfavour upon the policies that were adopted and pursued by the late king. But as long as Zain-ul-abidin was there, they felt powerless, much though they may have deplored in the words of Mulla Baha-ud-Din that the king "re-imported practices of infidels which had once become extinct." With his passing away, these forces

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of wickedness which had been kept in check for long got unleashed now, and attention was focussed on the Pandits. The barber Purni became the mouthpiece of the opposite forces, and kept on poisoning the mind of the king against the Pandits. Various measures were adopted against them. For long they tolerated all this. But even the tolerant Pandit found his patience at an end. It is recorded by the Muslim historian Hassan that:

> the patience of the Pandits having reached the breaking point they rose in a body and set fire to some mosques which were built with the material of the Hindu temples once demolished by Sikandar. The rising was quelled by the sword; many more were drowned in rivers, and loot and plunder was practised with unbridled license.[1]

Shrivara also describes the barbarous methods with which the Pandits were dealt with. Says he:

> ...Nonadeva, Shikhajada and others... had their tongues, noses, and a hand cut off... Jaya the son of an acharya, as also a Brahman named Bhima were manned, and they struggled and threw themselves into the Vitasta.[2]

Loot and arson of the sacred places remained the order of the day for a long time. The pressure exerted on the Pandits was so great that in order to save themselves from further troubles - at least those of them who could not withstand the onslaught and the oppression, according to Shrivara who was a contemporary historian, "gave up their caste and dress and exclaimed 'I am not a Bhatta.... I am not a Bhatta'."[3] But it should be understood clearly that the Muslim masses did not

1. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p.20.
2. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 188, [Dhar, Kashi Nath, VII. II. 51].
3. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, pp. 195-96.

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participate in any large numbers in this orgy of brute force and passions. The struggle was at the top, meant only to oust the Pandit from the seat of power. True, that the common Pandits in the city of Srinagar suffered, but in the countryside, the relations continued in a considerable measure in the same cordial manner, as in the reign of the King Zain-ul-abidin. There the Pandit pursued his course unmolested in his usual routine and Pandit and Sheikh lived as brothers.

Haider Shah was not destined to rule for long. He died only after a brief rule. Hassan Khan the son of the late king now ascended the throne in 1475 A.D. A great lover of music, he was himself a skilful musician who handled many instruments. Hassan Khan started with promise and "revived the laws and practices which were in vogue during the time of Zain-ul-abidin." For some time the things went on smoothly. But by this time powerful factions had come into existence. These took advantage of the king's too much addiction to wine and music, and started intrigues which bore their fruit in a terrific civil war. It weakened the state so much that the country fell an easy prey to the Moghul Emperor Akbar. But Hassan Khan had his own virtues. The seed of cultural unity sown by Zain-ul-abidin "had borne enough fruit in him."[4] Hassan Khan was a great Sanskrit scholar and well-versed in the Hindu Philosophy. It is said about him that "The king freed himself of envy and learnt the six schools of philosophy; and the different works of these six schools became one in him."[5] Making allowance for the poetical exaggeration of the poet historian, it can safely be inferred that Hassan Khan had drunk deep from the fountain of Sanskrit learning and his hatred for Hinduism was at the lowest ebb.

4. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 209; [Dhar, Kashi Nath; III, III. 33].
5. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 208; [Dhar, Kashi Nath; III, III. 22].

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Shrivara says that "He made a good use of his wealth by building *maths* and endowing villages in favour of Brahmans".[6] The Pandits performed a big *homa* on the day of his coronation. The mere fact that the king permitted such a ceremony to be performed on the auspicious day of his coronation shows that he possessed a fair measure of religious toleration. No wonder that the Pandits succeeded in getting gifts from him as the endowment of villages, etc. Describing his own relations with the king, Shrivara says:

> What has not king Shri Hassan given to me Shrivara, far beyond my worth? He has issued a proclamation about me, which as it emanates from the king is a source of great happiness to me. He has given me strong and swift horses and thick holy thread, and other beautiful articles beset with gold and jewels; and he has also given me beautiful boats with sails, and robes from his own person, and wealth.[7]

After paying homage to "Shri Jainulavadina" (Zain-ul-abidin) as a lover of all branches of learning, Shrivara says that "king Hassan is a master of music", Shrivara himself was a musician of great skill. He held his own against the Indian musicians who were always in attendance upon the king. There were also Indian dancing girls, Ratnamala, Dipamala, and Nripamala,[8] who "danced charmingly displaying emotions and gestures". With what poetical beauty does Shrivara describe Ratnamala, may be gathered from the following account of this dancing girl:

> The king praised the beautiful actress Ratnamala, her forehead marked with *tilaka* and he praised her dancing

6. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 209; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, III, III. 37].
7. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 234; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, III, III. 265].
8. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 233; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, III, III. 249].

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> and owned that she had melted the hearts of all by her steps and her movements, by her tremor and action. How she commenced the expected dance! And how her gestures, her movements, the expression of her passions and the swelling songs which flowed incessantly from her throat, inflamed all men! The vaunt of the skilful is worthless as straw in comparison with her... Her song was without a fault, her person was decorated with jewels, her beauty was great and she was possessed of merit. The Creator made her face like the full moon... The beauty of her face was nectar and a drop of nectar hung from her nose in the form of a pearl pendant..... Thus the youthful king praised the women in presence of his boon companions and took cups of wine from them.[9]

The king became addicted to such orgies. The affairs of the State were neglected, which paved the path for a civil war that continued for a number of years. The Pandits had approach to the person of the ruler. Some of them participated in his drunken orgies. The musicians were mostly Indians with whom the Pandits could very easily mix, but in the administration and in the politics of the country they had very little say. Yet they fared better than in the previous rule. They were left in peace to develop their art and literature. They were left so much in peace that they could build a *vihara* and a temple, a thing that could not be possible during the rule of Sikandar or Ali Shah. But this did not last for long.

Powerful factions with a definite class basis now came to the fore -front. Each tried to amass as much power in its hands as was possible. The most powerful faction was that of the Sayyids. It has been noticed in the foregoing pages as to under what circumstances the Sayyids came into the

9. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 232; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, III, III. 250-54].

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country. They started their career as preachers of Muslim religion whose main job was to secure as many converts as possible. They were treated with great consideration by the rulers. It has been recorded by Shrivara that:

> Knowing that Saida (Sayyid) Nasir and his people were born of the family of Paigambar and that they were men of great accomplishments and had come to adorn his kingdom, and were deserving of honour. The king Jaina [Zain-ul-abidin] had given them very high seats in his court, had shaken hands with them, and shown them unusual favour of bestowing his own daughters on them and assigning to them estates in the kingdom.[10]

It was but natural that under such unlimited royal patronage and favour they should have as a class become very powerful. Having cast off the robes of religious friars they gradually began freely dabbling in politics, and in the reign of Hassan Khan they became a force to reckon with. The Sayyids were one and all foreigners, but with the people they had the prestige of being the descendants of the Holy Prophet. They received great homage from the Kashmiris. As long as the Sayyids kept their class prejudices hidden, they remained in power, because it was after all the support of the people that kept them in harness. But then class prejudice cannot be kept hidden or suppressed for long. The Sayyids now gave expression to their feelings of hatred for others in an unbridled manner. Hassan Khan was married to a Sayyid girl and as Shrivara says:

> It was owing to the good luck of their daughter (the queen) that the Saidas (Sayyids) obtained wealth and greatness but they regarded the people of Kashmir scarcely even as grass. The king, bent upon furthering

10. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 222; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, III, III. 154-55].

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> the interests of the Saidas (Sayyids) acquiesced in orders, whatever they were, that were issued by them for their own selfish ends. They were busy in creating factions, and the king was forebearing...[11]

Haughty and arrogant, the Sayyids began to create enemies and thereby an organized opposition for themselves. The Kashmiri nobles could not brook their highhandedness for long. They became restive and even vociferous. But the Sayyids had isolated the king from them. They could scarcely get an audience with him. But somehow or other, Jahangir Magre, a great Kashmiri general whose power was sought to be broken by the Sayyids, gained an audience with the king. He spoke to the king in unreserved terms:

> These Saidas (Sayyids), O King! were once exiled but have been brought back. You have yourself brought this curse on this peaceful country... The Saidas (Sayyids) have further been encouraged by the Turushkas with hopes of support... they should always be feared. They are ever eager for the kingdom as vultures are for meat. It is not fit, O my master ! that you, who have many ends to accomplish should devote yourself exclusively to one... I am going away for the safety of your kingdom as well as of myself. The country is ruined, and you ought to save yourself somehow.[12]

Reference to the Turushkas (Turks) shows that the struggle was taking the hue of foreigners versus the indigenous population. Jahangir who had now assumed the leadership of the Kashmiris collected a small force and went away from the capital in wait for better times. There was yet another

11. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 252; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, III, III. 434-36].
12. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 253-254; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, III, III. 448-54].

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group and that was of the Chaks, a tribe of war-like people whose ancestor Lankar Chak had come into Kashmir during the reign of Suhadeva. The Chaks were not heard of very much during the previous reigns except in the time of Zain-ul-abidin, when they rose against the king and were suppressed with great severity. But now, when factional politics became the order of the day, they with their warlike habits came into prominence and the contending factions sought their co-operation and help. The Chaks partook of the characteristics of both : they were foreigners but their long stay in the country had obliterated most of the differences, physical and racial, that existed between them and the Kashmiris. So it was very easy for them to gain the confidence of one or the other. But for long they kept themselves in the background, and sometimes they sided with the one group and sometimes with the other. This shows that their group consciousness had not become very pronounced in the beginning. It was only when the whole tribe accepted the Shia creed that they appeared on the scene as a distinct group to play their own part on the political stage of the country.

The Pandits as a group were nowhere heard of in this drama. They were in strict seclusion and moved with great caution. They avoided strife and never participated in any controversy. Even their historians were cautious. Describing the defeat of the royal army in Bhautta war, Shrivara says:

> I have abstained from giving even a brief account of this defeat, in consideration of the present unsuitable times.[13]

But in the closing year of Hassan Khan's reign, when the power of the Sayyids had vastly grown, which was further

13. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 253; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, III, III. 443].

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augmented by the arrival of bands of their outside helpers, the Pandit was sometimes witnessed on the scene, though only as a victim of the high-handedness of the groups in power. It is recorded that the Sayyids were very fond of hunting and did not spare even those places which, because of their sanctity, were treated as sanctuaries. A *muni* named Vaisharana, who was held in high esteem, lodged a mild protest against trespass on his land. The result was that not only he but all the Pandits residing in the locality were made to suffer heavily. An idea of the measure in which their religious susceptibilities were wounded can be gathered from the following:

> The Turushkas were powerful and strong archers, they seated themselves in the houses of the Brahmans who had devoted themselves to the performances of the six duties; they ate from the vessels of the Brahmans the cooked meat of fowls killed as if in sacrificial ceremonies; and they gave themselves up to the pleasures of drinking. The inhabitants of this place were robbed of their domestic animals and rice and other things; and some of the avaricious servants of the Saidas (Sayyids) killed the people in their own houses.[14]

This gives in brief the description of the plight of the Pandits. How could trespass be committed on their lands and houses with immunity? How could they be robbed of all they possessed? And how the king, much though he might have wished to do so, felt himself powerless to render them any relief?

The embers of the struggle between the foreign Sayyids and the indigenous Kashmiris were smouldering under an external surface of seeming peace, when Hassan Khan died

14. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 261; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, III, III. 516-17].

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in 1487 A.D. On his death-bed, he expressed a desire that in preference to his minor sons one of the two other princes of the royal blood should be installed on the throne with this condition that his son, Muhammad Shah, should be nominated as his heir by the prince so succeeding. By this means he expected the establishment of a strong rule and also the minimization of chances of the civil war. But fate ordained otherwise. Kashmir was dragged into the vortex of a deadly civil war which ended the rule of Salatins for all time. And what was in store for the Pandits during the next century will now be seen in the following chapters.

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6
CIVIL WAR

SAYYID HASSAN Baihaqi was the minister of Hassan Shah who was his son-in-law. After Hassan's death Baihaqi regardless of the instructions given by the late king installed Muhammad Shah, his own grandson (and son of Hassan Shah) on the throne. Muhammad Shah was a boy of only seven years. The result was that Sayyid Hassan Baihaqi who now became the regent came to possess all the powers of the State. But this was far from the liking of the Kashmiri party. They organized opposition and the smouldering fire of civil war now burst forth as a terrific flame. Both parties began to amass their forces. The Sayyids were in harness, they had money and men at their disposal. As against them, the Kashmiri party was not so well equipped. But somehow or the other Kashmiri leaders enlisted the support of Paras, the king of Jammu who was passing his days in Kashmir as a fugitive along with a small force. The Kashmiris soon after took the initiative and fired the first shot. A night attack was made on Sayyid Hassan who was killed with thirty other Sayyids. His son Sayyid Ali collected his supporters and gave battle to the Kashmiri insurgents. After having won preliminary success, the Sayyids were completely routed. Scores of them were killed and many others went into hiding, and those who were caught were banished along with Sayyid Ali. The power of Sayyids was completely broken along with the pricking of the bubble of their prestige. The base of the Sayyids was the respect with which they were held by the Kashmiris. With the Kashmiris having turned against them,

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it did not take much time in seeing them exit as a class from the political arena though there were individual Sayyids who occasionally made some noise and then disappeared. Having routed the Sayyids, who were till then the main supporters of the boy king, Muhammad Shah, the insurgent Kashmiri leaders quite unexpectedly paid their homage to the boy king. With the elimination of the Sayyid influence, the Kashmiri party thought that they could hold the boy king as a pawn in their hands for furthering their own interests. But, not long after, this party also divided itself into two factions. Jahangir Magre, who had worked for the downfall of the Sayyids, now wanted to centralize all power in his own hands. Against him another group under the leadership of Tazi Bhat took the side of Fateh Shah, who was one of the two princes nominated by Hassan Shah to succeed him. Fateh Shah attacked Kashmir but was defeated by Jahangir Magre, who freely availed of the assistance of the exiled Sayyids who were now content to play the second fiddle under Jahangir. But Fateh Shah was again made bold to attack and this time with success. With Fateh Shah's success, another clique of the Kashmiris headed by Safdar as the chief minister came into prominence. But even in this group another clique headed by Shams chak, Shringhar Raina and Musa Raina came into existence. They poisoned the mind of King Fateh Shah against Safdar. In spite of his putting a valiant fight Safdar was defeated and then killed, and in his stead Shams Chak became the chief minister. This is for the first time when we hear of Chaks coming forward in the open, though it took many more years for them to establish their rule. During this civil war which lasted for a number of years, the worst features of human nature came into prominence. Perfidy not unmixed with flagrant breaches of faith was the characteristic feature of the participants in it. Muhammad Shah and Fateh Shah were their pawns. Some

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sided with one and some with the other, and while both the cliques ostensibly fought the battle of the rival princes, in reality they fought mainly for their selfish ends. Both Muhammad Shah and Fateh Shah lost and regained the throne not less than four times. During these days, the country was plunged in a worst phase of lawlessness. Roads were totally unsafe, trade was quite at a standstill, and agriculture was neglected. Life was a burden and property a misery. People fell from their morals and even the Pandits did not remain untouched. Shrivara speaks mournfully:

> Sons are now fond of the unethical practices and are ashamed to follow the *shastra* which was followed by their fathers and grand-fathers. Men of the four castes had graced the kingdom in former days but lately the people had gradually adopted wrong practices, and the ceremonies prescribed for special days in the Puranas came to be forgotten. Why should not the people whose customs are bad suffer calamities?[1]

Again, Muhammad Shah made his appearance. This time with the assistance of Sayyid Muhammad Baihaqi, who now became the chief minister. Shams Chak and his other Chak companions fled from the country along with Fateh Shah. The Sayyids foresaw the rise of the Chaks who along with Musa Raina, a Kashmiri notable had accepted the Shia creed at the hands of Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, who had begun preaching the new faith in Kashmir. Shams-ud-Din Iraqi was exiled by the Sayyids. Thereby they thought that they would succeed in stemming the growing Shia tide and also break the power of the Chaks. But this action of the Sayyids only cemented the bonds of union between a number of Chaks and Fateh Shah. Again, Fateh Shah ascended the throne. Shams Chak

1.Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 320; [Dhar, Kashi Nath, IV. 507-08].

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was appointed chief minister and Musa Raina was put in charge of some exalted office. But not long after the Shams Chak and Musa Raina fell out with each other. The Chak was murdered and Musa Raina became the chief minister with Fateh Shah, a silent observer of the drama that was being enacted in his presence and in his name.

With Musa Raina in the saddle, Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, the Shia preacher, came back to Kashmir with re-doubled zeal for the propagation of his faith. Not content with peaceful preachings, forcible methods came to be practised. In spite of Fateh Shah being himself a Sunni, many Sunnis, it is recorded were forcibly converted to Shia faith and some of them even were killed.[2] But, the Pandits were a target of special attention. Many of them were killed. Many more were forced to leave their hearth and home and migrate to other parts of India. About twenty four thousand Pandits were forcibly converted to Shia faith.[3] The property of the Hindus was confiscated. And those who were allowed to live had to pay *jazia* which was revived by Musa Raina.[4] By such means fresh converts were secured for the new faith. Politically and economically, the Pandits were now in the lowest pit of misery and degradation. Previously it was the personal attention of the rulers which had kept them going on. But with the rulers themselves in misery, the Pandits simply dragged on with their miserable existence. Many amongst them succumbed to the temptation of getting a better living, and found an escape from the existing troubles in renouncing their faith. But there were many who tenaciously clung to their faith and practices. Even during these days of turmoil when life was a misery for

2. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 223.
3. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
4. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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anybody, they produced authors who wrote exquisite commentaries on the Shaiva doctrines. Their scholarship in Sanskrit was at its height. Kashmiri scholars went all over India stopping at different places to hold discussions on various topics with the scholars there. One such great scholar was Keshava Pandit, a great poet and logician who went as far as Calcutta, coming out victorious at all intervening places. In Calcutta he had a discussion with Lord Gauranga (Chaitanya). Keshava Pandit, it is said could not withstand the spiritual prowess of the Lord Chaitanya and later became a devoted follower of his[5], and established his headquarters at Mathura. Kashmir's fame for Sanskrit learning spread all over India, scholars from all over the country came to Kashmir to drink deep from the fountain of learning here. Pandit Purushottam Kaul was the head of a great institution where training was imparted to students free of cost in all branches of Sanskrit learning. Baba Sri Chand the founder of the Udasi sect also received his training in this institution. Not only that, eminent scholars from Kashi and other places came over to Kashmir for discussions with the learned scholars here. It was only after they had established their scholarship here that they could claim a place amongst the really learned.[6]

With the civil war raging all round, the Pandits betook to the peace-time occupation of writing books on history, philosophy and poetry. The ever-changing political scenes had impressed upon them the evanescence of human life and

5. Brahmachari, Prabhudutta, *Sri Sri Chaitanya Charitravali* (in Hindi), pp.78-89.
6. Gangeshwarananda, *Baba Srichand ki Jivani*, (in Hindi) Baba Sri Chand was the son of Shri Guru Nanak Dev. [also see. Caturvedi, Pandit Sitaram, *Bharat ke Udasin Sant* (in Hindi), pp. 164-66; Purusotam Das, Mahant (ed.) *Bhagavan Sri Sri Chandra Ji*, (in Hindi) pp. 11, 19-22].

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related affairs. They imbibed a spirit of detachment and with this attitude they looked upon the world around them with its fullest store of miseries. In number they were considerably dwindled by forcible conversions and, as such, as a group they could not make a mark in times of war. It was quite possible that they could be carried by the tide and effected out of existence. The only alternative left with them in order to maintain their group existence was in zealously guarding their religion, philosophy, poetry and history. And this they did with a unique pertinacity which could not have been spent for any other better cause. That kept them living in spite of the adverse strokes of time.

Musa Raina did not leave even the Chaks. Though most of them had accepted the Shia faith, yet, for the time being, he broke their power as a group. But it was not for long that he had to continue in saddle. Again, Fateh Khan was ousted and Muhammad Shah came back for the third time. Muhammad Shah made his exit again and Fateh Shah became the ruler now for the last time. Fateh Shah, in order to eliminate the chances of bickerings and quarrels breaking out amongst his own supporters divided the country in four parts, out of which he reserved only one for himself. This time there was some semblance of peace in so far as the Pandits were allowed to go on a pilgrimage to Harmukuta Ganga where they used to immerse the ashes of their dead every year, and which had been discontinued for some years. But the nature itself was frowing upon them it seemed. On the fateful night when they were returning from the pilgrimage they halted on the top of a mountain for the night. At the dead of night they were overtaken by a terrific thunder storm and lightening which unnerved them so much that they ran helter-skelter on all sides. Thousands of them fell from the precipice into the running river below, many more died with

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cold, and while others were struck by lightening. The poet historian Shuka says that:

> ...Ganges was oppressed with hunger, and as it was after a long time that she had devoured bones, she surely devoured the men also who carried the bones.[7]

Ten thousand Pandits perished in this catastrophe. This event took place in 1517 A.D. The conditions obtaining in the country as a result of the civil war raging all round, can be gathered from the fact that even the pilgrimage to a sacred place had to be given up. Muhammad Shah was again ousted, this time by the Chaks. Qazi Chak was appointed the chief minister of the succeeding ruler.

Musa Raina had dealt a death blow to the Pandits. About twenty four thousand of them were forcibly converted. Their sacred places were desecrated and property looted. And those who survived this onslaught were allowed to live on payment of *jazia*. The conditions were indeed very deplorable. Somehow they thought of freeing themselves from this intolerable state of affairs. Under the leadership of Shri Nirmal Kantha a great scholar, they held a council, and perhaps wanted to lay a prayer before the king. But even this was not what would be tolerable to the ruling clique. It is recorded that one Muslim:

> Khuja Mir Mohammada [Khwaja Mir Mohammad] on the other hand, by devoting his life to the service of Kaka Cakra [Qazi Chak] and by giving him wealth, induced him, who was alarmed at the work of Nirmala Kantha and others, to give him permission to act against them; and actuated by the malice, caused them to be murdered.[8]

7. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 348.
8. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 353.

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Further on Shuka laments:

> O Brahmans! where in this Kaliyuga are your Brahmanical spirit and practice? It was for want of these that the sorrowful and the affrighted Nirmala Kantha and others were killed. The oppression of the Mausulas which began in the time of Saidas [Sayyids] was... perfected by Kaka Cakra [Qazi Chak.][9]

Shuka being an eye witness to all this, the pathos and the emotion in his writing can easily be understood. It could not but wound very deeply his feelings on seeing that a number of Pandits headed by a good Pandit should have been made to taste the bitter cup of death simply because they tried to look after the welfare of their people. But Shuka does not blame the Chaks so much as the Brahmans themselves who had forgotten their Brahmanical spirit and practices, which brought about the death of many good Brahmans. It will be of no use entering into the details of the civil war which had with the establishment of Shia faith sometimes given rise to the complex Shia-Sunni riots. This further weakened the Kashmiri ranks, because the Shias amongst themselves sided with the Chaks, an overwhelming majority of whom had accepted the Shia faith. In this context of the country's affairs, prince after prince came and went away, dragging a miserable existence on a tottering throne for a few months or years and then sank into oblivion. The Kashmiri party weakened itself by internecine quarrels, brought about by their division into Shia and Sunni groups, and commensurate with their weakness the Chaks gained in power and prestige. All the high offices came to be filled by them as the rulers were themselves dependent upon their goodwill. During this period

9. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, pp. 353-54.

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Babar and Sher Shah Suri also tried to get the suzerainty of the country but failed. To Babar, Chaks offered a brave front which raised them high enough in popular esteem. While the divided Kashmiri groups fought among themselves, the last in the line of the rulers, Habib Shah, was deposed by Qazi Chak who was Habib's chief minister and himself became the king.[10] Thus ended the rule of the Sunni Salatins, and in their stead the Shiaite Chaks became the rulers.

II

The Chak rule lasted for a brief span of thirty three years (1553-1586 A.D.). The Chaks were brave people but could build no base in the country. They had accepted the Shia creed. The bulk of the population in the country was of Sunni faith. Speaking from the religious point of view, there was a huge gulf existing between the Chak rulers and the ruled. To this their turbulent character and fanatical zeal for the propagation of their faith made an addition. Qazi Chak affected the forcible conversion of many Hindus and Sunni Muslims to the Shia faith.[11] Having once established their rule, they began to quarrel amongst themselves. They could not attend to any work of good government. It was at its best a military rule inflicted from above, and as long as the men at the top were united they could maintain themselves in their places. It was even in the reign of the first Chak ruler Qazi Chak that dissensions broke out in their ranks. His turbulent tribesmen could not brook the stern measures which were adopted by him in suppressing lawlessness. A series of

10. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
11. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, pp. 273-74.

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disorder followed, with the result that he had to abdicate in favour of his brother, Hussain Shah Chak, who though comparatively a man of catholic views and some education had also to abdicate in favour of Ali Shah. A severe famine in his reign further weakened the Chak ruler.

Moghul imperialism was now at the height of its glory. Akbar had brought nearly the whole of Northern India under his sway. How could it be possible that Kashmir, a tiny speck on the map of India and torn by internecine quarrels, could maintain its independence for long. Yusuf Shah Chak who ascended the throne in 1579 A.D. was thrown out after a brief reign of one year. He tried to regain his throne, but failed. The result was that he turned towards Akbar. Yusuf Shah went to Agra and kept on wooing for help. But after some time Yusuf changed his mind, probably because he felt that the help he sought would in the long run bring about his own effacement. Without waiting any longer, he started for Kashmir. He raised some troops and again succeeded in regaining his throne. Akbar on knowing all this was enraged beyond measure. He ordered that Yusuf Shah Chak must at once come to pay his respects. Yusuf Shah Chak was only to prepared for this, but his turbulent supporters stood in his way. Again there was a turmoil and some of Yusuf's men, having turned against him, went to Raja Mansingh who was then at Lahore and made a request for the conquest of Kashmir. Akbar thereafter ordered an expedition on Kashmir under Raja Bhagwandas, Shah Quli etc. The Chaks also made mighty preparations to meet their formidable invaders. In this whole affair, Yusuf Shah played a most perfidious role and just at the moment when victory was about to be snatched from the Moghuls, he joined them without consulting any of his supporters. But even then the defenders did not lose heart. They installed Yakub Chak on the vacant throne. Taking

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advantage of incessant reins which cut off the Moghul forces from their base, and converted their camp into a huge marsh, the Kashmir army inflicted blow after blow upon the invaders. Raja Bhagwandas finding his position very insecure, entered into a treaty with Yakub Chak and left the country after securing a promise of tribute from Yakub Chak. Yusuf Shah Chak, fallen from grace everywhere, remained in captivity for some time. He was at last given a command in the Bengal army, but after some time his brain was deranged and soon after he died.

But Yakub Chak did not follow the victory with any constructive effort to mend the country's affairs. On the contrary he himself contributed to the prevailing disorder. The giant of religious fanaticism was again roused from his slumbers. The Jama Masjid, the main centre of the Sunni worship was being repaired. This was very much resented by him. As a result, he ordered the *qazi* to add the words *ali vali alla* to *Qalima* (the holy Muslim formula) to make it more acceptable to the Shias. This the Sunnis resented and greatly too an orgy of repression was let loose upon them. Many were killed in a very ruthless manner, many more were flung into prison.[12] The *qazi* also was killed for his refusal to make the addition in the *Qalima*, and his corpse was tied to the tail of an elephant and dragged through the city.[13]

Yakub did not stop at that. The Pandits also were dragged into this affair and greatly oppressed.[14] A wholesale conversion of the Pandits was planned. But as ill luck would

12. Fauq, *History of Kashmir;* also see Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, pp. 329-31.
13. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II p.331.
14. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II p.332.

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have it for him, Yakub fell ill those very days and, therefore, the idea was given up.[15]

Akbar did not ratify the treaty entered into by Raja Bhagwandas with Yakub Chak, and was eager to annex the province, when in the meanwhile the persecuted Sunnis sent a deputation, headed by Sheikh Yakub Sarfi and Baba Daud Khaki to wait upon Akbar. They apprised him to the conditions taking place in Kashmir, and made a request to him to free Kashmir from the clutches of the insolent Chaks. Akbar agreed to their request. A pact was made, the terms of which were as given below:

(1) That the king shall not interfere with the religious affairs, the purchase and sale of goods and the rates of food grains and cereals.

(2) The officers of the Government shall have no male or female Kashmiri as a slave.

(3) That the inhabitants of Kashmir shall not be molested in any way.

(4) That the nobles of Kashmir having been a source of mischief in the past shall have no share in the administration of the country.

This done, Akbar deputed Mir Qasim with an army of forty thousand strong. Yakub Chak also collected an army of thirty thousand but at the crucial hour the major portion of his army deserted him and went over to the other side. Yakub was defeated and the country passed into the hands of Akbar in 1586 A.D.

15. Gangeshwarananda, *Life of Baba Sri Chand* (in Hindi).

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7
EMPEROR AKBAR AND THE PANDITS

IN THE preceding chapters we have seen the general plight of the Kashmiri Pandits. Both man and nature combined its forces to work for their destruction. There was an acute class prejudice against them, and every attempt was made to break their power and solidarity by such highly questionable methods as death and forcible conversions. Every turmoil that rose and every civil wai that ensued, the Pandit was dragged into it much against his will, and he was made to pay his toll. In the period which followed the glorious rule of Zain-ul-abidin, Kashmir was plunged into a dreadful anarchical state. People got no respite, no peace, and no opportunity to develop the brighter side of their nature. Education was neglected, commerce dwindled, and the world-famous arts and crafts of Kashmir were fast disappearing. Homage to one's religion was paid by reviling that of others. But in the orgy of fratricidal struggle, which was the order of the day, it was the Pandit alone who maintained himself on a high moral pedestal. The fire of suffering and sacrifice through which he passed, added to his moral stature, and, in course of time, he came to command great respect even in hostile surroundings. At times his moral uprightness came to be interpreted as hypocrisy, and his observance of religion as practice of witchcraft. But the mass feeling was veering round them, though there was not a dearth of religious maniacs who found in their ranks a rich field for forcible proselytization, or that of political opportunists, who tried to pass as champions of their faith by suppressing the Pandits. But all this did not

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break their backbone. Undaunted, they sped their way unmindful of the blows and buffets that were in store for them in an abundant measure. It is a wonderful phenomenon but all the same true that after the fire of oppression they were beset with, they came out unscathed and with great vigour. And when Akbar reached Kashmir, the first thing that struck his discerning eye was the moral supremacy of the Pandit. In *Ain-i-Akbari*, we come across a significant passage which runs as follows:

> The most respectable class in this country (Kashmir) is that of the Brahmans, who notwithstanding their need of freedom from the bonds of tradition and custom, are the true worshippers of God.
> They do not loosen the tongue of calumny against those not of their faith, nor beg nor importune. They employ themselves in planting fruit trees and are generally a source of benefit to the people.[1]

Commendation like this coming from such an eminent person as Abul Fazl must speak volumes by itself.

Akbar came to Kashmir in 1588 A.D. and stayed here for a sufficiently long period to make an estimate of the general conditions of the country and its people. He visited the places of natural scenery, on one side, and, on the other, settled the affairs of the country which had seen no peace for more than a century. The warlike and turbulent Kashmiri nobles were ousted from all places of power and their power of mischief was sufficiently curbed. Roads were repaired and travel was made safe. The Pandit too did not escape his notice. He wanted to place him on par with all other citizens without any inferiority attached to him on the score of religion. The

1. Jarrett, Col. H.S., (tr.), *The Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul-Fazl, Vol. II, p.355.

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jazia once removed by Zain-ul-abidin was again imposed on them by Musa Raina. Akbar ordered its repeal. This removed a crushing burden of inferiority which was placed upon the Pandits. The reaction of the Pandits may be gathered from the following passage, which appears in Shuka's narrative:

> Formerly, the kings of the house of Chaka used to exact an annual fine from the Brahmans owing to their animosity towards the people of that caste. In every house a Brahman of good family and character who maintained his own caste used to pay an annual tribute to the king. For the preservation of his sacred thread, a Brahman annually paid a tribute of forty Panas to the king. The good Brahmans had left the country... and the low Brahmans had given up their caste... Now when king Jyallaladina [Jalal-ud-Din] learnt of the condition of the Brahmans, he repealed the practice of levying fines on them... He announced that he would without delay reward those who would respect the Brahmans in Kashmir... The Brahmans versed in Vedas... blessed the king.[2]

But the munificence of the Emperor did not stop here. The Pandits' plight, which can be gathered from the words that follow, was indeed pitiable:

> One thousand cows used to be killed every day, without any opposition, under the orders of the kings of the house of Chaka and for them. The Brahmans had been overpowered... even as by darkness... The means of their livelihood were destroyed... they did not remain in the country, even as deer do not stay in the forest which is burnt. As they left the country, they sometimes felt alarm in the way, and sometimes like the Jachal they were the objects of laughter and of reproach.[3]

2. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, pp. 420-21.
3. Dutt, Jogesh Chander, p. 421.

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This is the narrative of an eye-witness, which is fully supported by the Muslim historians. If, after all this, the Pandits had maintained their virtues to the extent of their being called as the 'most respectable class,' surely there must have been something unique in their social structure, which kept them alive under most adverse circumstances.

Akbar evinced great interest in the rehabilitation of the Pandits. They were received in audience where they related their grievances to him. The Emperor listened to their grievances with great sympathy and the commands were issued for their immediate redressal. Rent free villages were reserved for them. Aditya Pandit, a Kashmiri, was appointed to supervise a distribution of these lands amongst the Pandits. Ramdas, who accompanied Akbar to Kashmir, has been praised beyond all measure by the Kashmiri historians for taking great interest on behalf of the Pandits. During his stay in Kashmir, Akbar participated in the national festivals of the Pandits. On the 13th of *Bhadoon* which is celebrated by the Pandits as the birthday of Vitasta (river Jhelum), he ordered illuminations all over the city and himself participated in the festivities. All this was a great and descisive step towards recognizing their distinct social existence. As a group, they again came into prominence.

Moghul rule in Kashmir opened a new chapter in the annals of Kashmir. After Kanishka, it was perhaps for the first time that Kashmir was linked with a vast empire. Roads were constructed that made travel both easy and safe. Trade and commerce developed, with this the indigenous arts, crafts and industries received a great deal of encouragement. This gave rise to a rich commercial class amongst the Kashmiris, though, in matters of administration, the Kashmiri Muslims did not figure very high. This was but natural. Even after

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Kashmir had passed into the Moghul hands, there were rebellions mainly backed by the Kashmiri nobles for whom the establishment of a vigorous and a strong rule was a challenge to their very existence. And Akbar was not unmindful of this. One of the conditions in the pact which preceded Akbar's military action in Kashmir was that the Kashmiri nobles should be deprived of any share in the governance of the country. No place of administrative trust was reserved for them. *Subedars* (Viceroys) were deputed from Delhi, who brought their own assistants to work under them, and whenever there was the necessity of utilizing the local talent they preferred the Pandit who was politically harmless. The most important work which confronted the administration was the preparation of a land assessment report. Qazi Nurullah and Qazi Ali were deputed from Delhi for the preparation of a land assessment report. Even during the terrific vicissitudes through which the Pandits had to pass, the preparation of the land records remained in their sole charge. They were treated as experts in this branch of administration. It was because of his special knowledge of the land assessment work that Pandit Tota Ram, who later acted as the *peshkar* to the first Moghul Viceroy, Mirza Yusuf Khan, was appointed to assist Qazis Nurullah and Ali. Together they produced a report which became the basis of land settlement. But in spite of this the Moghul rule produced a silent and steady revolution in the body politic of the country. They did not favour keeping of political power in the native Muslim hands. But they could not prevent the growth amongst them of a rich trading class either. These people went every year to India with their merchandize, and came back laden with riches and fresh ideas. They gathered great influence and even criticized the government. Even though they had no hand in the government, yet they did not strive for it. In

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the first instance, the Moghul rule brought peace and even some prosperity to the people at large. A general rising of the people who were now passing through times which stood in a marked contrast to the days of the Chak sway was out of question. And the upper classes had enough opportunity to earn money, and they had no reason to disturb the *status quo*. Besides, the military rising was a sheer madness. A puny country like Kashmir could hardly stand the organized might of the Empire. Along with the growth of a Muslim commercial class, the Hindu traders from abroad came in numbers to Kashmir and settled in the country.[4] Gradually, they appropriated a large amount of export trade in their own hands. But it took a hundred years more before a struggle against them could develop. For the time being, there was an alround prospect of peace and prosperity.

For the Pandits, the establishment of the Moghul rule opened a new vista. They were now linked with India. That provided for them a rich and a fresh field. There they went every year - some as pilgrims to the holy places and some in search of a living. Gradually there sprang up Pandit colonies in Agra and Delhi. There too they maintained their separate identity, and came to be known as 'Kashmiri Pandits', a term said to have been coined by Emperor Muhammad Shah on a representation by Pandit Jai Ram Bhan to distinguish them from the Brahmans of other parts of India. There, the Pandits who had already acquired a mastery over the Persian language were well-received in the literary circles. They wrote exquisite poetry in this language. To mention one amongst scores of them, reference may be made of Pandit Chandra Bhan, who was a great scholar and was ranked amongst the

4. Kaul 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir*; also see Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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major poets of the day. Pandit Chandra Bhan was a great favourite of both Shahjahan and Dara Shikoh. The knowledge of Persian stood the Pandits in very good stead even in the early days of the British rule. The British had to deal with records maintained in the Persian language. The result of all this was that Pandits came to be employed in government services in large numbers, and at the Bar where a knowledge of Persian was necessary for the interpretation of documents written mainly in Persian.

After a stay of a few months, Akbar left Kashmir. A number of Pandits who were encouraged by the treatment they received at his hands left Kashmir along with him. Chief amongst this group was Pandit Sada Kaul who settled in Agra. Pandit Sada Kaul lived a long life and was very well treated both by Jahangir and Shahjahan. The latter went to the extent of granting him a *mansab* besides bestowing on him a *jagir*, houses and the titles: *itmad-ul-saltanat*, *mashirul-mulk*, *mirza raja* and *ghamkhwar*.[5] The family is now known as the Ghamkhwar family. During the Moghul history, the scions of this family played a prominent part which will be referred to at the proper place. This Pandit group established its first colony in Agra, wherefrom they spread to other towns of India. Here they were driven by the exigencies of service or other causes. Having migrated in a group, these Pandits successfully maintained their group identity. They followed the same customs and religious observances as were in vogue in their mother country, and did not marry outside their community. This caused them to keep their connections with Kashmir in tact, which, on account of the safety of travel was not a difficult job. In course of time, their *Bhach Bhats*, priests and *purohits*

5. Fauq, *Tarikh-i- Aqwami Kashmir*.

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also followed them, migrated from Kashmir and settled in Agra and Delhi. Thus a class of Pandits with definite group characteristics came into existence in India and was able to hold on its own even in a strange land. Being well-versed in Persian, they got themselves easily admitted into the literary circles, which were till then the close preserve of the Muslim upper classes. This brought about a sort of cultural exchange between them and the Muslims, and though in his orthodoxy the Pandit was at his highest, yet that did not stand in his way of establishing cultural links with the Muslims. This has remained a characteristic feature of the Pandits all along.

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8
PANDITS AND THE LATTER MOGHULS

WE HAVE noticed in the preceding chapter that the policy of the Moghuls was to keep the Kashmiris ousted from the higher spheres of administration, though it was at the invitation of some Kashmiri nobles themselves that Akbar entered Kashmir as a victor. There was enough lawlessness in the country which was mainly the result of the civil war that raged in the country for about a century. The people who counted were divided and sub-divided into groups and cliques. Their main pastime was intrigue and mutual wrangling. Kashmir was a frontier province and the maintenance of peace here was, therefore, a pre-requisite for the safety of the Empire itself. But the disturbances now engulfed the whole of northern India. As long as the Kashmiri nobles would remain in power, peace would be an impossibility. Their power was to be broken. So the fourth condition in the pact made by the Kashmiri nobles with Akbar, to which reference has been made already[1], was "that the nobles of Kashmir having been a source of mischief in the past shall have no share in the administration of the country". As against them, *subedars* came to be deputed from India, who came to Kashmir followed by a retinue of their trusted men. They were placed in charge of more important offices. Powerful Muslim families like that of Shahmiris, Chaks, Magreys, Rainas, Maliks, Bhats etc. who had for centuries been the masters of the destiny of

1. See chapter 6, p. 70.

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the country now fell from their high pedestal and within the short span of a generation they became unknown to history. No Kashmiri Muslim was recruited in the army. Their martial spirit was curbed and crushed. A Moghul army of occupation was placed in the country. The main occupation of the bulk of the population was now the peaceful profession of agriculture and petty shop-keeping. In the entire period of the Moghul Kashmir we come across very few Kashmiri Muslims who might have made a mark in history.[2] But, in spite of this clear policy of keeping influential Muslim Kashmiris down, another class of Kashmiris now came into existence which though not directly concerned with administration amassed great power though in another direction. The Moghul established a strong link between Kashmir and India. The roads were safe. Trade and commerce increased. Kashmir was known for its industries from times immemorial. Shawl industry now flourished. Shawls worth millions were manufactured and exported to different parts of India for which there was a great demand at the court. In place of the warlords of a previous regime commercial magnates now appeared on the scene. Year after year, they went to Agra and Delhi and as their clientele was in the higher circles, they silently came to wield an influence even in matters of administration by carrying tales about the merits and otherwise of the administration. But even then they did not dabble in politics, and kept themselves contented with only amassing the wealth. In the closing years of the Moghul rule, this class became powerful enough, and their share in bringing about the downfall of the Moghul rule in Kashmir was no mean one.

2. Sarkar, Jadunath, *History of Aurangzeb,* Vol. V, p. 341 (based on *The History of Kashmir* of Khwaja Azam).

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With regard to the Pandits, the policy of the Moghuls was different. They looked upon them as the 'most respectable class'. The Pandits had kept themselves aloof from the orgies of civil war, and in spite of sufferings that they had to undergo, they did not forget the cultural side of their heritage. They studied both Persian and Sanskrit and wrote exquisite books on poetry and philosophy in these languages. In this period we come across a galaxy of eminent scholars and savants whose contributions to history and philosophy are unique. Unique in the sense that in the thunder and lightening of a stormy political weather they found time to write on the subjects which require a close study in a highly peaceful atmosphere. Shrivara and Prajna Bhatta the two great historians; Shivopadhyaya, the Shaiva philosopher; Shiva Varma, the grammarian; Ratna Kantha and Balla Bhatta Shaiva philosophers; Somadeva, Sahib Kaul, author of Tantric books; Narayan Kaul, the historian and others belonged to this period. The torch of the learning of this ancient land was kept alight even in the storm of the prevailing times. Akbar was always accompanied by eminent scholars. No wonder that the Pandits attracted his attention and thus came to be rightly treated as 'the most respectable class'.

But even the Pandits seldom reached the top, though sometimes they were appointed as *peshkars* to the Moghul *subedars*. But in marked contrast to the Muslims, the ranks of the army were not kept closed to them, and for long the defence of the border areas was entrusted to them which in view of the contiguity of Yagistani areas was a job of great responsibility. This can very easily be understood. The frontier tribes were all of them Muslims. A Hindu commander could be very safely trusted to deal with them. In Moghul history we come across Rajput generals appointed even to the governorship of Kabul. Following the same policy, the

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Kashmiri Pandits were appointed to the military command on the frontiers. Meru Pandit, whose ancestors had migrated from Kashmir in the time of Sikandar (1394-1417 A.D.) and settled in the Bahmani kingdom in the south during Feroz Shah's reign, was appointed as the officer in command of the forts in Kamraj province. Meru Pandit himself had been in-charge of Golkanda fort and his family was at Ellichpur (Deccan). Having left the service of the Golkanda chief, the Pandit came to Delhi, where he was appoint to a command in Nurjahan's body-guard, with the kind offices of a benefactor, Hakim Abdul Fateh of Shiraz. Not long after, Meru Pandit got a chance of showing his military prowess. Mahabat Khan who had fallen from the royal favour was called to answer some charges. Jahangir was then at Jhelum where Mahabat Khan had gone with his faithful Rajputs and taken Jahangir as his prisoner. Nurjahan collected her forces and succeeded in freeing Jahangir from Mahabat Khan's captivity. Meru Pandit distinguished himself by his military skill in this affair and came to the notice of the Emperor. Jahangir soon after came to Kashmir. As a mark of royal favour, he brought Meru Pandit along with him and even permitted his family to settle in Kashmir after a gap of more than two hundred years. Meru Pandit was granted extensive *jagirs*, and besides he was made the governor of Kamraj with the authority to build and supervise forts on the borders.[3] Forts were built by Meru Pandit and his sons at Sopore, Baramulla, Shivapura, etc. Meru Pandit recruited people from Muzaffarabad and Uttara and Lolab to man his forces. The efficient administration of Meru Pandit elicited highest favours from his Moghul overlord. More *jagirs* were offered to him in lieu of his military services. Bulaqi Pandit, the fifth in the descent from

3. Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir.*

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Meru Pandit, was as usual in charge of the border defence. By now the Moghul rule had considerably weakened. The raids of Yagistani robber bands had become very common and the task of defence more ardous. But Bulaqi Pandit took war into the enemy's territory, and having inflicted a crushing blow upon the raiders, returned with a number of prisoners. A truce was effected. The leaders of the Yagistanis swore by the Holy Quran that in future they would desist from raiding Kashmir, only if the prisoners were released and other measures abandoned. This was done and peace was restored on that side.[4] Bulaqi Pandit was succeeded by his son Mukunda Pandit. He could not pull on well with the *subedar*. The result was that he left Kashmir in stealth along with his family. Leaving his family at Kishtwar he further proceeded to Delhi. There he related to Emperor Muhammad Shah the constraint under which he had to leave Kashmir. The Emperor received him well with his kindness, and granted him a *khillat* and put him in charge of the revenue administration. He even changed the *subedar*. But the command of the forts was taken from him and was given to another commander. However, the connection of the Pandits with the army did not cease thereby. Shortly after, some of them entered the Sikh army, while some joined the Maratha and other armies.

In the civil administration, the Pandits held very high places. Pandit Mahadeva was the *peshkar* (chief minister) of the Moghul *subedar*, Ali Mardan Khan (1650-1657 A.D.) It was during his *peshkar*-ship that the imperial highway from Srinagar to Gujrat[5] was constructed. At every stage a *caravan sarai* was constructed and the road was made wide and easy

4. Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir*; see also *History of Dhar Family* compiled by Krishna Dhar.
5. Name of a town in Panjab, cf. Stein, Vol. II, p. 204 notes on verses 143-44.

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to traverse. But the class pride of the Muslim nobles was very much wounded by the appointment of Pandits to such high offices. It was quite in the natural order of things that these people should have not taken it upon themselves to inflame the Kashmiri Muslim masses against the Pandits. The policy underlying the appointments of Pandits was very easily understood by them and it did not remain hidden from them. The iron hand of the grand Moghul, however, kept them back from creating any major communal upheaval. But even then spasmodic communal eruptions did take place. Pandit Mahadeva had once to deal with famine conditions, which on account of the scarcity of crops could not be bettered to the satisfaction of the people. At the instigation of some Muslim nobles headed by Khwaja Mam - who had their own axe to grind - a mob of Kashmiri Muslims fell upon the house of Pandit Mahadeva, looted it of its valuables, and set fire to the State granaries. The news, though slow, did at last travel to Delhi. Shahjahan was greatly upset by this. The rising against the Pandit was interpreted by him as a rising against himself. Some Kashmiri nobles were summoned to the royal court, to explain circumstances that led to the attack on Mahadeva's house. Headed by Mulla Yusuf Kavasa they reached Delhi, and were in due course ushered into the royal presence. The dialogue between Mulla Yusuf and Shahjahan shows the serious notice that the latter had taken of the whole affair. Shahjahan inquired of Yusuf as to who was responsible in his opinion in Mahadeva's case. Mulla Yusuf said: "In my opinion neither Mahadeva nor anybody from the public is responsible". But Shahjahan did not at all like the tone of the answer and cutting his answer short thundered out: "If none of the parties is at fault, is it then I, who am at fault? I regret

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why I put this question to a person so devoid of sense."[6] Hearing this Yusuf fell senseless on the ground. After some time he revived and was shown out of the royal presence. Not bearing the disfavour Yusuf died only a few days after.

Pandit Mahdeva's episode, though trivial in itself shows beyond doubt the policy which the Moghuls had adopted in Kashmir. They relied more on the Pandits than on their Kashmiri co-religionists. They raised their prestige and helped them in maintaining their identity as a group. This created a struggle between this class and the Muslim upper class. For long did this struggle remain in a dormant condition. But it did appear in course of time and, caused harm not only to the Pandits as a class but even to the Moghul rule itself. But for the time being all went well.

Even during the reign of Aurangzeb, the Pandits occupied a very high place in the country and the *mansabs* were granted to them. Chaudhary Mahesh Shankar Das was a *mansabdar,* and it appears that he was in possession of fabulous riches. During the *subedar*-ship of Saif Khan (1668-1671 A.D.) he laid an extensive garden on the banks of Dal lake near Nishat Bagh. He constructed a road, a sort of a causeway, which exists even today across the Dal lake over a distance of four miles which connected the garden with his residential house at Rainawari. Twelve bridges were constructed at suitable distances on this causeway and on one of them there exists even today an inscription which gives the date of the construction and the name of the person who constructed[7] this road, i.e. Chowdhary Mahesh Shankar Das. The garden

6. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, pp.507-08; see also Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i- Kashmir.*
7. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir* (in Persian); see also Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir.*

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itself was so beautifully laid that every week the *Subedar* used to repair to it. Saif Khan was himself a great builder, but so much was the beauty and grandeur of Chowdhary's garden the Viceroy could not hide his feelings when he used to remark bitterly:

> *chawdhari mahesh bag na kard*
> *dar dili saif khan dag kard*
>
> Chowdhary Mahesh did not lay a garden. He simply created a scar in the heart of Saif Khan.[8]

There were other Pandits too who laid extensive gardens and orchards. These exist even today and proclaim in mute eloquence the spirit of public service innate in them.

The ruling policy of the Moghuls was strictly political and religion did not play a prominent part in giving it a shape. Many Rajput Rajas were made the grandees of the Empire and they contributed in an equal measure with the Muslim grandees to the consolidation of the Moghul Empire. Instances are not wanting to show that while the Muslim grandees sometimes turned traitors, the Rajput Rajas shed their last drop of blood in defence of the Empire. This by itself is a proof, if proof be needed, to prove the successful working of the Moghul administrative policy.

8. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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9
PANDITS AFTER AURANGZEB

WITH THE passing away of Aurangzeb, the forces of turbulent lawlessness that had found place of safety underground now appeared on the political firmament. Aurangzeb had, even before he ascended the throne, perceived that the external pomp and magnificence of the grand Moghul had succeeded in only hiding the weaknesses which had silently crept into the fabric of the Moghul rule. He wanted to strengthen the rule. This he aimed at by crushing the opposition and giving an indelible Muslim complexion to the administration. While doing so, he alienated all those who were not of his religious faith. By this he created an opposition for himself which gathered so much strength in course of time that it did ultimately destroy the Moghul rule for all time. He undertook useless wars in the Deccan against Muslim States which stood as a bulwark between him and the rising Maratha power. The Deccan Muslim State having been removed from the field, Aurangzeb came face to face with the rising Maratha power. Unlike Akbar, Aurangzeb had lost his faith in the people. At the most, he could rely either upon his army or the handful of the Muslims who were of his way of thinking. For twenty long years he remained in Deccan to fight the Marathas and others. These useless wars exhausted his treasury and weakened his army, and threw into prominence a set of people who were difficult to manage and impossible to subdue. The result was that for his sons he left behind a weak legacy which they could not maintain. The army, though weak, became the sole arbiter and during

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the reign of the later Moghuls, it was the military leaders who swayed the pendulum backwards and forwards.

In Kashmir, we have already noticed that the policy of the Moghuls was not to encourage the local Muslims. But though the feudal Muslim families were crushed, other families had come into prominence who amassed huge wealth by adopting trade and commerce as their profession. Along with them there arose another class of commercial magnates who migrated from the neighbouring provinces of the Punjab and Delhi.[1] These were invariably Hindu Khatri. They conducted a brisk business, and had a great hand in the export trade. They had established a colony of theirs in Mohalla Gulshan near Hari Parbat hill close to the royal palaces. The high class Pandits took their residence at Rainawari which is a suburb of Srinagar close by the seat of the government,[2] which existed then inside the fort surrounding the Hari Parbat hill. The Pandits were employed in the government offices. Thus, at the close of the rule of Aurangzeb, three classes appeared on the top: the Muslim commercial class, Punjabi Khatri traders and the Pandits. It may be mentioned that the Khatri traders were greatly encouraged by the Moghul rulers, and it was under their patronage that they settled in Kashmir. May be they were encouraged to give a set-back to the Kashmiri Muslim commercial enterprise. Whatever may have been the reason, a struggle between the Hindu Khatri commercial class and the Muslim commercial class was inevitable. The Muslim traders had an advantage over the Hindu traders in so far as they had an easy approach to the Muslim masses whom they could inflame in the name of religion against the 'infidel' traders, who for no fault of their

1. Kaul 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir*.
2. Kaul 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir*.

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own robbed the Muslims of their wealth. The Khatri could rely only on the government protection which they got in an abundant measure as long as the government was strong. The Pandits too had by now become quite influential and affluent. They passed their days peacefully, and the local bureaucracy was mainly manned by them. Their ascendency in the political field was unrivalled in Kashmir.[3]

Aurangzeb died in the year 1707 A.D. After twelve years of his death when Muhammad Shah ascended the throne, the government was weakened very much. Many provinces declared their independence, but Kashmir dragged itself on as a Moghul province. Muhammad Shah ascended the throne in the year 1719 A.D. Within a few months of his ascending the throne, the struggle in Kashmir came to a head. Muhatta Khan, who was perhaps a Kashmiri, wandered in his boyhood outside Kashmir, till he got access to Bahadur Shah who succeeded his father Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D. Muhatta Khan secured a *jagir* for himself, but lost it soon after Bahadur Shah's death. Destitute and forlorn he came back to Kashmir in sheer dismay and frustration. On his arrival here, he found the Hindus passing their days in great ease and comfort. Trade and commerce had greatly passed into their hands and the administrative business was mostly conducted by them.[4] Muhatta Khan, who was credited with a deep knowledge of Islamic law, somehow or the other found fault with the policy followed by the *nai'b subedar* Mir Ahmad Khan towards the Hindu, and made it plain that the ascendency of the Hindus was intolerable from every point of view.[5] In pursuance, he laid a prayer before the *subedar* to the effect that:

3. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*.
4. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*.
5. Khwaja Azam, *History of Kashmir* (Azam was an eye-witness to all this).

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(1) No Hindu should ride a horse, nor should they wear a shoe.
(2) They should not wear *jama* (an attire of the Moghuls).
(3) They should not bear arms.
(4) They should not visit any garden.
(5) They should not have *tilaka* mark on their forehead.
(6) Their children should not receive any education.[6]

The *subedar* refused to agree to these proposals. But Muhatta Khan who was of sterner stuff could not take this lying down, and he took the law into his hands. He established his seat in a mosque, and therefrom issued orders in furtherance of his proposals. He collected a huge following who were deputed to harass and humiliate the Hindus in general. He issued an edict saying that wherever a Hindu is seen riding a horse he should be pulled down, *tilaka* mark should be erased from a Hindu's forehead and his turban and shoes should be snatched away. Besides this, orders were issued that no Hindu should attend any school or visit a garden, nor should he wear decent dress and so on. This was a signal for a general rising, and an orgy of loot, plunder and murder was let loose. A Hindu Khatri trader named Majlis Rai Chopra, who was a native of Jullundar possessed more than a crore of rupees worth property in Kashmir.[7] While he was at the close of a religious ceremony feeding a number of Brahmans in a garden, the followers of Muhatta Khan attacked

6. Khwaja Azam, *History of Kashmir;* See also Pir Hassan Shah Vol. II, p.579; and Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
7. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*.

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him.[8] The Brahmans ran helter-skelter in all directions and Majlis Rai Chopra himself ran into the house of the *Subedar* Mir Ahmad. Muhatta Khan and his men surrounded the house of both the *subedar* and Majlis Rai Chopra. Mir Ahmad Khan somehow left his residence and collected a small force to fight Muhatta Khan. But he was soon overpowered and ousted from his post on the accusation of his being favourable to the Hindus. Muhatta Khan himself assumed all power of the State. Having done so, he ordered a systematic attack upon the Hindu areas. Hundreds of them were killed and maimed, and most of them were looted and their houses burnt. Majlis Rai Chopra was killed with great ruthlessness and his property was plundered. The Hindus, thus crushed, began to run away in large numbers and hide themselves in mountain areas. And those who remained behind lived under the humiliating conditions imposed by Muhatta Khan and his band.[9]

The attack upon Majlis Rai Chopra is symbolic of the real class basis of the struggle. The general Hindu population was made to suffer because they shared with him his religion, though not his wealth. But the Muslim masses did not participate in this orgy in any large numbers. Rather we have it on the authority of a non-Muslim historian that many Muslims gave shelter to a large number of Hindus and kept them concealed in their houses till better times dawned.[10] This is by itself indicative of the fact that the struggle was merely at the top, and the masses were dragged into it by exploiting their religious sentiments only.

8. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
9. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
10. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir*.

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Muhatta Khan continued to be in the saddle. Mir Ahmad Khan left the country and was succeeded by Abdulla Khan. But he too could not suppress the rising, and Muhatta Khan took possession of the State treasury. Another *subedar* named Momin Khan arrived in the meanwhile. The struggle now entered another phase. The two sons of Muhatta Khan were killed at the instigation of Abdullah, a local *rais*. But, as ill luck would have it, some of the participants in the murder were Shias. They were a hated class because the shawl manufacture was in their hands, and the factory workers were mostly Sunni Muslims. A Shia-Sunni riot also occured which brought untold miseries upon the former.[11] This was followed by the murder of Muhatta Khan, when he arrived in the country. Even then Momin Khan found himself unable to cope with the forces of disorder rampant in the country. As a stroke of policy he recognized the son of Muhatta Khan named Sharaf-ud-Din as successor to his father in the exalted office of Sheikh-ul-Islam. The son improved upon the methods of his father and inflicted various kinds of tortures, mental and physical upon the Hindus. He did not spare even those Muslims who had in any way sympathized with the Hindus.[12] Momin Khan also failed to establish order, and had to make room for Abdul Samad Khan. The new *subedar* came with a strong force, captured Sharaf-ud-Din and put him to death along with the fifty confederates who were hanged publicly. The orders against the Hindus were withdrawn, and it was after an agonizing period of a number of years that the Hindus were permitted to use a turban, to put on good clothes, to wear the *tilaka* and to send their children to schools and to perform their religious ceremonies.

11. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
12. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir.*

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During this period the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits was miserable beyond measure. Their houses were gutted and property looted. Many were killed and the conditions that were imposed upon those who lived were worse than death. But the Pandits had an invincible confidence in themselves and continued to drag on their existance though miserably, in wait for better times. And better times did at last come. Abdul Samad Khan, having established order in the country, set himself in all seriousness towards the task of rehabilitating the Pandits. Sufficient relief measures were adopted and unbounded benevolence was shown to them by the State. Again they came to be associated with the administration of the country. During the *subedar*-ship of Abu Barkat Khan who succeeded Abdul Samad, the Pandits regained their former prestige and power. Abu Barkat Khan condoned even the serious mistakes of the Pandits and appointed one of them named Pandit Mukunda Ram Khar as his *peshkar*.[13] All the powers of the State were vested in the *peshkar* who wielded them with great skill and consideration. Abu Barkat Khan was very popular among the Pandits, and it was through their propaganda and similar kind offices that he came to be appointed as *subedar* of Kashmir not less than five times.

The Pandits, or better known as Kashmiri Pandits, had by now risen very high at the Moghul court in Delhi. Important State business was conducted through them. Pandit Jai Ram Bhan held a *mansab*. He was the head of the small community of Kashmiri Pandits who were living in Delhi and Agra. For long did he wield enormous influence at the Moghul court. But even there the Pandits had their enemies. On a complaint by Raja Raushan Rai Kamboh before Qamar-

13. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir.*

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ud-Din, *wazir* of Emperor Muhammad Shah, the Pandit was incarcerated, his property was confiscated and his sons also were sent to prison. He was later on sent to Muradabad but, on the way, he was murdered at the instigation of the Raja. An order was communicated to Inayat Ullah Khan, the *subedar* of Kashmir, for the confiscation of the property of Pandit Jai Ram Bhan. Inayat Ullah Khan had many reasons to be grateful to the Pandits. He sent word to Pandit Jai Ram Bhan's brothers to conceal whatever they possessed of value before a formal search was made of their houses.[14] The result was that though a search was made of the houses, nothing valuable could be found there.

The closing years of Muhammad Shah's reign, which was greatly weakened by the attack of Nadir Shah, witnessed a considerable lawlessness and disorder in Kashmir. The *subedars* refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Moghul overlord. There were insurrections and wars which reduced the people to the lowest ebb of penury. Trade and commerce, art and industry died. Agriculture was abandoned and the people witnessed a terrible famine. So many died of hunger and starvation that it became impossible to manage the dead. Srinagar was looted and gutted a number of times. Other towns fared no better. Fields once rich in harvests were lying desolate, and beautiful hamlets which studded the country were mere heaps of ruins with no signs of life in them. It was during these unsettled days that Muhammad Shah the Moghul Emperor died in the year 1747 A.D.

14. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir.*

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10

A SURVEY OF MOGHUL RULE IN KASHMIR

THE MOGHUL rule was essentially a military despotism, but not of the variety witnessed during the regime of the Delhi Sultans who preceded the Moghuls. The despotism of the Moghul rulers, though military in character, was yet very benevolent. They did not remain content with only winning fresh territories or maintaining peace and tranquillity in the realm, but were always solicitous for the welfare of their subjects. Praise has been bestowed upon them for their achievements in the domain of architecture, painting and other fine arts. There are yet others who have admired their liberal out-look and the spirit of religious tolerance. But it goes without saying that the greatest achievement of Moghul sovereigns was to free the government from the shackles of theocracy. It was they who took to kingship as a profession and never boasted of being the 'protectors of the faithful' and so on. They introduced political ideas into their administration and evolved an administrative policy which was strictly political and secular, never the theocratic or based upon religion. They remitted *jazia*, the imposition of which was amongst other reasons based upon the fact that since a "non-Muslim, in strict theory, cannot be allowed to fight on behalf of the Islamic State, he must pay for the support and up-keep of the army of the faithful (Muslims) who fight for the faith (Islam)."[1] The *jazia* having been remitted, the Hindus

1. Saran, P., *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, p. 119.

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in general and the Rajputs in particular were enlisted in the Imperial army. Even during Aurangzeb's reign, Jai Singh was in command of the Emperor's Deccan armies. The strict interpretation of canonical doctrines did not in any way prevent the Emperor from following a policy which political considerations dictated. The removal of *jazia* put both the Muslims and non-Muslims on par with each other. The Hindus were made the grandees of the Empire. The part played by the Rajputs in consolidating the Empire is known to all. In Kashmir, as is recorded in the preceding pages, Pandits too were given commands in the army, though the Pandits' services were utilized for local purposes only.

The Empire was divided into a number of *subas* (provinces). Kashmir was one such *suba*. Each *suba* was placed under a *subedar*. The *subedar* was the head of the provincial administration and was responsible for the maintenance of law and order. He was assisted by a *diwan*, in charge of financial matters, and a *faujdar*. In Kashmir, there used to be a *faujdar* in Anantanag,[2] then known as Islamabad.

From ancient Hindu times Kashmir was divided into a number of *parganas* (sub-districts) traditionally thirty six which served as administrative units. Each *pargana* was administered by a *parganadar* under whom were other petty officers such as *patwaris*, *thanedars*, *shikdars*, *qanungo*, *fotedars*, etc. A *parganadar* and his local bureaucracy was responsible for land revenue collections.[3] Land revenue was collected in kind. To begin with, the land revenue was fixed at about twenty-two lacs of *khirwars* of *shali*. Later on, the

2. Kaul, 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir.*
3. Kaul, 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir.*

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produce of the whole country according to *Ain-i-Akbari* was estimated to sixty one lacs of *khirwars* of *shali*, and the land revenue was fixed at one-half of the produce. Says *Ain-i-Akbari*:

> The system of revenue collection is by appraisement and division of crops... Payments in coin and kind were estimated in kharwars of (*shali*) rice. Although one-third had been for a long time past the nominal share of the State, more than two shares were actually taken, but through His Majesty's justice, it has been reduced to one-half. According to the assessment of Qazi (Ali), the revenue was fixed at 30 lakhs, 63, 050 kharwars 11 Taraks, each *Kharwar* being 3 man, 8 sers *Akbarshahi*, of Shali.[4]

In *dams* the land revenue came to 7, 46, 70, 000 *dams*,[5] which would mean that the price of one *khirwar* of *shali* was about 24 *dams*, i.e. ten *annas*. In Shahjahan's reign, the total revenue (including other taxes and duties) was estimated at rupees 37,50,000, and on the death of Aurangzeb it was rupees 57,47,734, though previous to this the revenue had shown some decrease.[6]

Agriculture was very well looked after, and many improvements were effected in its methods. Irrigation was a special concern of the State. The karewas (tablelands), situated all over Kashmir, were mostly irrigated, and much ingenuity was displayed by the engineers in carrying water to the top of these hillocks.[7] No wonder that the produce of *shali* and other food-grains was very rich and abundant. Fruit

4. Jarrett, p. 366.
5. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
6. Sufi, Vol. I, p. 266.
7. Bernier, Francois, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, A.D. 1656-1668*, p. 396.

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growing was practised on an extensive scale. The methods of grafting was introduced in Kashmir during this period.[8] Many Central Asian fruits were thus introduced in the country; and many gardens were laid in Kashmir during this period. Wherever one may go in Kashmir, a Moghul garden in ruins will be there with a grove of Chinars to proclaim in mute eloquence the past glory of the place. The *subedars* while following in the footsteps of the emperors vied with each other in laying gardens. During this period, seven hundred gardens are estimated to have been laid.[9] The Chinar tree is believed to have been imported during this period.

Akbar selected the site for laying the seat of the government near Hari Parbat hill. A fort was constructed around the hill, and a town was founded there which was named as Nagarnagar. The fort itself was named as Nagarnagar fort. In constructing the fort one crore and ten lacs of rupees were provided from the royal treasury and besides two hundred master-builders were sent from Delhi. The construction greatly relieved the horrors of a famine which had broken out during those days. The *subedars* had their residence inside the fort. The fort had twelve big gates, besides a number of small entrances, the latter led to the gardens laid by various Moghul *subedars*. The palaces where the *subedars* lived were constructed inside the fort on the northern and the eastern side of the hill. Jahangir himself raised a magnificent palace on the eastern side. So did Ali Mardan Khan, a *subedar*, to its north. Other *subedars* raised similar palaces. There was a stream which flowed near the palaces. This was known as Lacchmi Kuhl. This stream catered to the needs of the people who attended Jama Masjid

8. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
9. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir.*

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for prayers. On the southern side of the fort there was a gate known then as Delhi Dharwaza which exists even now; and is now known as Kathi Dharwaza. The *naubat shahi* was located there. The jail was just near it at a place where the present jail is situated. The reason why the gate is now known as Kathi Dharwaza is perhaps that the condemned people were hanged there - the word in Kashmiri for a scaffold being *'kathi'*.

The Moghuls in spite of their despotism were not unmindful of public opinion. Various were the methods adopted by them to keep public opinion on their side; one such method was not to allow anybody to go to bed with an empty stomach. Houses for poor were started under royal patronage, which fed the poor and infirm sections of the people. In Srinagar there was one such house located in a building known as *bilor khana* which was constructed just near the royal palaces on the shore of Sadrabal lake. Food was served free both morning and evening to anybody who felt its need.[10] On the western side of the fort there was another gate which led to Idgah. In the Idgah, there stood a mosque and a Chinar grove. Here, on the Id day after *namaz* the *subedar* and other *mansabdars* participated in a number of games. Horse races and peg sticking were practised. Thousands of people enjoyed sight-seeing and really enjoyed Id.[11]

The *subedars* and other *mansabdars* had quite a jolly time, and the people also were happy and peaceful. For the *subedars* and other affluent people drinking water was brought from Gagribal. The sluice at Drugjan was just at the place as it is now.

10. Kaul 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir.*
11. Kaul 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir.*

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Kashmir carried a brisk trade with Central Asia and India. It was the centre where from articles of Indian manufacture such as muslins, brocade, etc. were transported to Central Asia and China, and the Central Asian manufactured articles were sent to India. In fact, it was a meeting place for traders from such distant places as Balkh and Bukhara in the north and Delhi and Amritsar in the south.[12] The revenue from customs was estimated at two lacs of rupees,[13] which, while taking into consideration the fall in the value of the rupee since Moghul times, is much more than is the income even at present. Anantanag was the place wherefrom trade was directed with India and Jammu, Bhadrawah, Kishtwar and other places.[14] The habit of taking tea which is now universal in Kashmir was inbibed during this period following contacts with the Tibetan traders who had themselves taken it up from the Chinese.[15]

Many industries flourished in Kashmir during this period, chief of them being carpet and shawl industries. Silk-worm was reared and the silk industry was flourishing. Besides, there were other industries such as papier machie, silver work, copper work, wood work, furs, leather work and paper manufacturing. About paper, it is recorded that Kashmir did "fabricate the best writing paper of the east, which was formerly an article of extensive traffic; as were its lacquer ware, cutlery and sugars;..."[16] The shawl industry was at its peak during this period. There were about forty thousand shawl looms working in the State during this period.[17] Shawls

12. Kaul 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir*.
13. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*.
14. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*.
15. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*.
16. Forster, George, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. II, p.19.
17. Forster, George, Vol. II, p. 19.

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found their way in all parts of the world. Merchants and commercial agents from all over Asia were stationed here. The art of shawl making was highly developed, and a shawl could very easily pass through a ring. It is recorded that a Sayyid who had come to Kashmir in 1796 A.D. carried with him a shawl given to him as a gift which he later presented to Khedive of Egypt, who on his part presented it to Napoleon. Napoleon handed it over to his wife Josephine, who later introduced it to fashionable Paris societies.[18] Gradually, Kashmir shawl secured quite a good market in France, and which continued right up to the day the French were defeated in the Franco-German war of 1870 A.D. The collapse of France contributed, in a very large measure, to the collapse of the industry in Kashmir.

During the Moghul period in Kashmir, the shawl weavers did not seem to have been reckoned as a respectable class. May be that they were quite an exploited class. In any case, their lot was very far from being enviable. Many pithy sayings concerning them are current even now, and these would describe their plight in an unmistakable manner. Even now whenever circumstances urge somebody to use an inferior stuff where a better stuff should have been used, the man on inquiry would without a moment's thought retort with an old saying : *sin muhima sochal, raini muhima khandawav* which rendered in English would mean 'famine of vegetables will force you to eat *sauchal* (a wild grown vegetable) and dearth of good husbands will compel a woman to choose a shawl weaver'. Compared to modern conditions there were too many other sayings yet in vogue. But this too is a fact that they eked out a secure living from their profession and never starved, though they seldom were in opulent circumstances.

18. Sufi, G.M.D., Vol. II, pp. 565-66.

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There was not the baffling problem of unemployment of the present day. The fact that about forty thousand shawl looms were working in the country would show that besides the forty thousand workers on the looms twice the number must have been dependent on this industry alone. These would include spinners, darners, washermen, embroiderers, dyers etc. besides the rich shawl magnates and their staff and servants. The unemployment in towns, it can be easily imagined, must have been almost non-existent. The people with even small incomes could have kept starvation at an arm's length. The produce of food grains had gone very high, in as much the price of a *khirwar* (two maunds) of *shali* was only ten *annas*, which, on account of further increase in production during Shahjahan's reign, must have gone further down. But this would not lead one to the conclusion that the peasantry was a hard-hit lot. In the first instance the abundance of food produce must naturally have kept them free from its want. Besides, it has to be borne in mind that the value of money at that time was nearly thirteen times as much as it was at the beginning of the Second World War, and the value of the rupee was four times than it is today.[19] Even though a *khirwar* of *shali* fetched in those days only eight *annas*, that would mean in our currency thirty-two rupees and eight *annas*. This compares very favourably with the present day prices. Besides this, the village population as elsewhere in India, had a complete village economy. They had their own carpenter, barber, iron-smith, physician, washerman and weaver. These were paid in kind at each harvest in lieu of the services they rendered during the year. Fruit was abundant, which, on account of its perishable nature, and want of speedy means of transport was not exported in

19. Saran, P., p. 165.

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any large quantities. Unlike these days, fruit was very cheap and people used it as an item of food.

The shawl factories were working at two places near Jama Masjid and Buchhwara at the foot of the Shankaracharya hill. The weavers also had established their residential colonies at these two places.[20] It is believed that the waters of the Dal lake have some special properties needed for washing the yarn and it is therefore, that Buchhwara was chosen for starting factories. Paper manufacturers existed at Vicharnag,[21] but the finishing touches were given at Harwan.[22] Namda-making was yet another industry. The dealers had established themselves at Baldimar in Srinagar,[23] and did quite a brisk business. It is not possible to know the exact amount of wages drawn by a worker at a factory. In any case, it could in no way be less than that of a peon - the lowest in rung in official hierarchy - who was paid in those days rupees three to eight per month in India.[24] Judging from the fall in the value of the currency, a person with an income of rupees three to eight per month then is as good as a person of these days with a monthly income of rupees one hundred and fifty. All this might seem a fiction, but it is strange that it has been a fact.

The State too made a huge income from this all round prosperity. At the close of Akbar's rule, the land revenue of the valley was a little more than rupees twenty four lac. By the end of Aurangzeb's rule, the land revenue may have gone up by another six lacs. The total income, including taxes, customs and excise duties was about rupees fifty seven lac

20. Kaul, 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir.*
21. Kaul, 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir.*
22. Kaul, 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir.*
23. Kaul, 'Aziz', Narayan, *History of Kashmir.*
24. Saran, P., p. 165.

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during Aurangzeb's rule, which, while deducting the land revenue, would leave a balance of about rupees twenty seven lac from other sources. The figure of rupees fifty seven lac would indeed become a staggering figure if converted into modern currency. No wonder then that the Moghuls in Kashmir were responsible for a number of beneficient projects, such as road-building schemes, irrigation schemes, laying of gardens, fruit improvement schemes and so on.

For a period of one hundred and fifty years, Kashmir witnessed an era of unprecedented peace. Trade and commerce too were in a flourshing condition. Majlis Rai Chopra, to whom reference has been made earlier, hailed from Jullundar Doaba ,[25] and as he is said to have owned a crore of rupees worth property in cash and kind,[26] he did extensive money-lending business, and when he fell he had an outstanding credit of twenty-four lacs.[27] He is said to have charged an interest of eight *annas* per cent.[28] There were other Khatri traders who were equally rich. The lot of the Kashmiri Pandits could in no way be described as unhappy. They had quite a good say in the affairs of administration, and their causes were decided by the Hindu judges according to the *shastras*. One such judge being Shrikantha, the Kashmiri Pandit, who on account of his learning was appointed by Jahangir.[29] Deeds were generally written in Sanskrit - not in the polished language of scholars, but in a dialect which was an admixture of Sanskrit and Persian. There

25. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir*.
26. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*.
27. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*.
28. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*.
29. The *Debistan-i-Mazahib* translated by Shea & Trojer, pp. 164-65, [quoted by Sufi, Vol. I, p. 264].

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was a fair measure of religious toleration. Even Aurangzeb granted some lands to the *pandas* of Martanda (Mattan) *tirtha* under his royal seal. The *pandas* of Martanda have preserved this *sanad*. There were many religious festivals celebrated then by the Pandits, which have now fallen in disuse and so were many *tirthas* which are not known now. These *tirthas* the Hindus used to visit year after year.

But from this it should not be estimated that there was no *Subedar* who did not misbehave at times. Such instances of misbehaviour were many. But the moment information reached the ruler at Delhi, prompt measures were adopted to set the matter right. The Pandits made a complaint to Jahangir against Qilich Khan - a *subedar* during his reign. Jahangir at once wrote to the *subedars*:

> Protection of Governance. Thy complainants are many and thy thanksgivers few. Pour cloud-water on the thirsty people, or else relinquish thy administrative post.[30]

30. Sufi, Vol. I, p. 264.

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11

AFGHANS APPEAR ON THE SCENE

CONSEQUENT UPON the murder of Nadir Shah at the hands of his own followers in the year 1747 A.D., Ahmad Shah Abdali seized his vast dominions and installed himself upon the throne. Such an incident as Abdali coming to power could not pass unnoticed in Kashmir. The policy of the Moghuls towards the Kashmiri Muslims was not at all favourable to them. Very few Kashmiri Muslims were ever given a *mansab*, and the portals of the military service were closed for them. But, in spite of this, a rich class of industrialists dealing in shawls and other similar articles had come into existence amongst them. The rise of this class contributed largely to the weakening of the Moghul rule in Kashmir. This class had harboured a rancour against their Moghul rulers, which was further augmented by the partiality which the latter had shown for the Kashmiri Pandits. Now that the Moghul rule was on its last legs, the rise of Ahmad Shah Abdali created new hopes in the mind of these Kashmiri Muslim notables. Some amongst them wrote a letter to him, inviting him to depute a *subedar* to Kashmir, with the assurance on their part that the country along with its Moghul *subedar*, Afrasaib Beg Khan, would be handed over to him without any bloodshed. By chance this letter fell in the hands of Afrasaib Beg Khan, who, thinking it inopportune to take any drastic measures against the offenders, merely produced it before them in an open *durbar* with the hope that such a generous gesture on his part might prevent them from further mischief. But this yielded no beneficial results and fresh

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conspiracies came to be hatched up. The result was an Afghan incursion. After meeting with some preliminary success the tide turned against the Afghans, and they met with complete discomfiture, and were forced to beat an ignominious retreat from the country. This incident took place in 1748 A.D., the year Muhammad Shah died. Muhammad Shah was succeeded by Ahmad Shah, in whose reign Kashmir permanently passed out of the Moghul suzerianty and came into the possession of the Afghan King Ahmad Shah Abdali, although for a period of five years more it lingered on as a part of the tottering empire of the Moghuls. Ala Kuli Khan was the last Moghul *subedar* of Kashmir. He took charge of his office in the year 1752 A.D. and appointed Mir Muqim Kanth, a Moghul by race and a Kashmiri by domicile, who later on played a prominent part in the history of Kashmir as his representative (*nai'b qaim muqam*). The term of Afrasaib Beg's office was very troublesome for Kashmir. Civil war, famine and flood had wrought havoc upon the country. Mir Muqim set himself in right earnest upon the task of giving a substantial measure of relief to the people. Besides, he introduced a number of wholesome reforms in the administration of the country and effected reduction in the pay of the army and disbanded a large number of soldiers whose maintenance was an unnecessary burden on the already famished treasury. But this action of his served only in reviving the smouldering embers of tension, which was inherent in the prevailing conditions. Abul Qasim, the son of Abu Barkat, a former (*moqul*) *subedar* was in Kashmir. He found time propitious for striking a blow against Mir Muqim Kanth whose phenomenal rise was more than he could tolerate. He came out of his retirement, collected all the discontented soldiers under him, and raised the banner of rebellion. Deputing his brother, Nur-ud-Din Khan, with a considerable force from

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the side of Nawa Kadal,[1] he himself took a different route and made a well planned attack upon the house of Mir Muqim Kanth at Zaldagar, and set it in fire after looting all the valuables from there. After this, Mir Muqim Kanth was forced to fly for his life to his *jagir* at Khuihama, and there he stayed waiting for a suitable opportunity. A few more minor skirmishes decided the fate of the country. The Moghul rule came to an end, and Abul Qasim became the ruler of the country.

Abul Qasim was not destined to enjoy a peaceful rule, which as it was, did not last longer than three months. In the meantime, Ahmad Shah Abdali reached Lahore. Mir Muqim Kanth who was biding his time at Khuihama, a village held in fief by him, now joined his hands with Khwaja Dedamari another Kashmiri, and together they sent a prayer to Ahmad Shah Abdali to effect the conquest to Kashmir. Abdali was only too glad to oblige the two Kashmiri notables, and deputed Abdulla Aishak Aqasi with a considerable force for the conquest of Kashmir. Abdul Qasim too made elaborate preparations to meet his formidable adversary. The two armies met at Gund Naimat, a village near Srinagar. The battle raged for fifteen days. Tremendous efforts were made by Abdul Qasim to turn the tide against Aqasi. He was on the verge of success when the commander of his forces, Gul Khan Khaibri, played false with him and joined the other side. This decided the fate of the battle, which was so vigorously fought and treacherously lost. Abdul Qasim fell into the hands of the enemy, Aqasi made a triumphant entry into the city of Srinagar and laid the foundation of the Afghan rule, though it took some more years before the Afghans were firmly established

1. 6th bridge on the river Jehlum in Srinagar city.

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in the country. But, for the time being, devastation was let loose in the country.

Abdullah Aishak Aqasi did not stay in Kashmir for more than six months, but even during this short period he ruined the country completely, and left no stone unturned in giving the people a correct idea of what the future would be like. The houses of the rich and poor alike, were plundered. Huge fines were imposed upon the people. Their property was pillaged without mercy, and those people who incurred his displeasure were murdered most brutally. The panic that he struck in men's mind was so great that many people found solace in commiting suicide. Mir Muqim Kanth, whose political career had begun with great promise, completely lost his former identity and fully identified himself with the brutal activities of Abdullah Aishak Aqasi. He proved to be a real force of oppression for the whole country, and by means, as have been described above, he helped Aqasi in collecting a crore of rupees from the poor and already famished people of Kashmir. For the Kashmiri Pandits, Mir Muqim Kanth became a terror, and many Kashmiri Pandits left their native land in despair. A popular verse of those days may well describe the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits:

> *ah dil hama khaufo khatr ast dharin shahr*
> *kun azmi safar fitna muqim ast darin shahr*
>
> O Heart ! Both fear and danger are rampant in the city. Prepare for journey disorder is stationed (*Muqim*) in the city.

The Kashmiri Muhammadans themselves were tyrannized beyond all measure, and their pent up feelings found articulation in the verses in Mulla Ahmad, who painfully depicts the picture in the following lines:

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shud nai nagma kuchai faryad
harfi afghan chu darmain uftad
sori afghan chu bishnavem beqail
yadam amad zi suri israfil
shori mahshar dayari afghan ast
bas ki pur shor kari afghan ast
nagaha chu balai damangir
shah aqasi rasid dar kashmir

> Sweet music of the flute got itself changed into mournful notes as soon as the Afghan made his appearance on the scene. The uproarious Afghan with his dreadful voice makes one feel the terrible panic of the resurrection day. Whatever the Afghan does brings before one's eyes the dreadful picture of the resurrection day with all its din and bustle. Suddenly a calamity overtook the country, the moment (Aishak) Shah Aqasi set his foot in Kashmir.

Having stayed in Kashmir for a period of about six months, Aishak Aqasi left for Kabul, leaving behind him Abdulla Khan Kabuli to carry on the administration of the country. Abdulla Khan Kabuli, however, was not destined to occupy long the exalted office to which he was appointed by Aqasi. The people were tyrannized beyond measure by Aqasi, and they could expect nothing better from his nominee. The rule of the Afghans too was not fully established in the country by then. Soon after, a conspiracy was hatched by Sukh Jiwan Mal and Abul Hassan Bandey, as a result of which Abdulla Khan was murdered. Fully disgusted as the people had become with the methods used by Aqasi, not even a faint voice was raised by them against Abdulla Khan's murder. The removal of Abdulla Khan from the field of action allowed a breathing space for the people of Kashmir, and so bitter was the memory of the past few months that they gladly received the news of Raja Sukh Jiwan himself having assumed the reins of the office of the administrator of the country. This event took place in the year 1754 A.D.

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12

SUKH JIWAN'S METEORIC CAREER

SUKH JIWAN, a native of Gujrat, was serving in the army of Ahmad Shah Abdali when he was deputed to serve under Abdullah Aishak Aqasi in his Kashmir campaign.[1] Aqasi appointed him as *sahibkar* to Abdulla Khan Kabuli. But, as already stated, Sukh Jiwan soon after assumed the reins of the office of the *subedar* and appointed Abul Hassan Bandey[2] as his prime minister. For some time, Sukh Jiwan carried on the government in the name of Abdali. Ahmad Shah Abdali too did not deem it expedient to take any serious action against Sukh Jiwan, and even issued an appointment order to him. For some time, the affairs were carried on smoothly when Abdali made a peremptory demand for a huge sum of money, over and above the annual tribute. Sukh Jiwan could ill afford to fulfil this demand. The people of Kashmir were already impoverished beyond measure, and any further burden on them would have meant the complete ruination of the country. The result was that Sukh Jiwan refused to comply with the order. This left him no other alternative but to declare his independence, which he did. After this Sukh Jiwan set himself in right earnest in giving relief to the people, and the first step that he took in this direction was to establish a strong government. He strengthened the frontiers, and made it penal for the frontier people to allow any Pathan to cross the frontier.[3] Besides, he organized the army on a sound footing,

1. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir*.
2. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
3. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir*.

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and invited the Sikhs and Sansis from the Punjab, and enlisted them in his army.[4] Troops were also raised from the frontier Muslim tribes. A terrible famine occured in Kashmir during these very days. Various measures were adopted by him to successfully cope with the calamity. He ordered a census of the whole population of Srinagar, and on that basis he issued ration slips to the people. The names of the inmates of a household were noted on the ration slips and these were issued to the head of the household. The rations were supplied to the people from State granaries at the rate of one *anna* a *seer*. To the peasantry, he made a *taqavi* grant of a lac of *kharwars* of paddy for seeds.[5] He succeeded in establishing a settled and a humane government, which stood in such a glaring contrast to the chaotic conditions which prevailed before him that the people without any distinction of creed or caste gathered under his banner.

The news, that Raja Sukh Jiwan had declared his independence, made Abdali furious. Again, he deputed Abdullah Aishaq Aqasi with a considerable force to effect the conquest of Kashmir. Sukh Jiwan also made mightly preparations to meet his formidable foe. A prominent Khukha[6] chief Beera Khan, cast his lot on the side of Sukh Jiwan. Abdullah Aishaq Aqasi, elated with his former success, started a whirl-wind campaign, unmindful of the consequences. But at Hyderabad, a village near Srinagar, he was offered a stout resistance by Sukh Jiwan. The battle lasted some time, resulting in a complete discomfiture for the Afghans. Aqasi fled from the field, leaving behind him a large number of his soldiers either dead or prisoners in the

4. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, pp. 653-62.
5. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*.
6. The Khukhas are living on the left bank of river Jhelum below Baramulla.

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hands of Sukh Jiwan who returned to Srinagar, an independent and victorious ruler, and was given an appropriate reception by the people.

But all was not to go well with Kashmir. Mir Muqim Kanth, who was all these years biding his time at Kabul, having learnt of the Afghan discomfiture at the hands of Sukh Jiwan, thought it useless to wait any longer at Kabul, and started for Kashmir. On arrival here, he found his former power and influence gone, to regain which he could trust in nothing better than his favourite weapon of intrigue. In a short while, he succeeded in bringing about a rupture in the harmonious relations that existed till then between Sukh Jiwan and his prime minister, Abul Hassan Bandey. The result was that Abul Hassan was sent to prison, and Mir Muqim Kanth was appointed in his stead in the year 1757 A.D. But Mir Muqim Kanth could not maintain his position for more than a year. His intrigue came to light, with the result that he was himself sent to prison. Abul Hassan Bandey again came to power, but this time his career was quite short-lived. Sukh Jiwan had gone out on a military campaign towards Sialkot, in his absence the Bomba tribes rose in rebellion. Abul Hassan, who was in charge of the affairs in his absence, failed to suppress the rising. Sukh Jiwan hurried back from his Sialkot campaign and, having suppressed the rising, dispensed with the services of Abul Hassan who was suspected of treachery, not without proper reason. Mir Muqim Kanth again succeeded in getting his former appointment. In the meantime, Mir Khan Khukha raised the standard of revolt, and Sukh Jiwan went in person to quell the rising. Abul Hassan Bandey, chafing under the wrong which he perhaps believed was done to him undeservedly took advantage of Sukh Jiwan's absence and rose in rebellion. Having destroyed all the bridges of the Srinagar city, he drew all the boats to his side and waited for

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Sukh Jiwan. It did not take much time for Sukh Jiwan to suppress the rising, but the happenings of the past one or two years left him no other alternative but to chalking out a new policy for the future. Ever since Mir Muqim Kanth's return, the whole country had become a hotbed of intrigue, and the whole politics of the country had resolved itself into a continuous game of seesaw between the two rival Muslim courtiers. He decided to put a stop to this game, and in pursuance thereof he ousted both Mir Muqim Kanth and Abul Hassan Bandey from all positions of power, made his choice from the Kashmiri Pandits, and appointed Pandit Mahananda Dhar, a Kashmiri Pandit notable, as his prime minister.

Pandit Mahananda Dhar was a person of great tact and resourcefulness, and fully justified the choice which his master made in appointing him as prime minister. The intriguers having been made powerless for the time being, there ensued a lull in the storm of war that had broken with such frequency in the near past. With the assistance of the Pandits, Sukh Jiwan applied himself to the task of setting right his administration. Various measures were adopted for the betterment of the lot of the peasantry. Many beneficent projects of public utility were undertaken. Learning was greatly patronized. Poetry was encouraged. Sukh Jiwan, who himself wrote exquisite poetry, took a lively interest in poetical symposiums. All this bespeaks of an era of peace which again seemed to dawn upon the country, after Sukh Jiwan had utilized the co-operation of his Pandit prime minister. Some Muslim historians accuse Pandit Mahananda Dhar of inimical tendencies towards the Muslims, and in their support they state that it was at his suggestion that cow-killing was made an offence by Sukh Jiwan.[7] But inspite of what the later day

7. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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historians may have to say, the popularity of Pandit Mahananda Dhar with the Muslims was certainly at a very high level. He had adopted measures of a most beneficient character for the amelioration of the lot of the masses. This could not but make him rise in the people's estimation, and his popularity with the Muslims can be gauged from the following Persian verses that were addressed by a contemporary poet, Muhammad Jan Beg to Sukh Jiwan, in which reference is made to the Pandit in most glowing terms:

kar pardazi tu mahanand ast
anki hast az qabilai dhar ha
me numai banami o tankha
naqd o jins o barat u chakar ha
guft dar babi justane rozi
saadi agah az mukkadar ha
rizik har chand be guman birasad
sharti aql ast justan as dhar ha

Mahananda, who comes from the clan of the Dhars is your chief minister; you have rightly made him master of all cash, kind and administration. Saadi who is well versed in reading the mysterious working of the decrees of Fate, has said that God certainly gives bread to all, but the condition that one has to fulfil is that he must possess wisdom, and then seek it from Dhars.

Even after Sukh Jiwan's fall, both Pandit Mahananda Dhar and his cousin Pandit Kailasha Dhar maintained their former position of prestige and power. This could never have been possible if their actions were characterized by a spirit of bigotry. That would have naturally made them lose the support of the masses which they had gained in the past, and, but for which they would have sunken into oblivion with no claims on history to mention their achievements.

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But the independent rule of Sukh Jiwan assisted by a Pandit prime minister was more than the powerful Muslim upper classes could tolerate. So when they found all their former prestige and power gone, they could not be expected to keep silent. Fresh conspiracies were hatched by them, and this time they succeeded in making a tool of a Balkhi prince who, having been expelled from his own country, was enjoying the hospitality of Sukh Jiwan for a number of years. The prince made a most cowardly attack upon the person of the Raja and wounded him seriously. He no doubt paid the price of the dastardly outrage with his life, but naturally enough this brought in its wake a general disorder. The opportunity was at once seized by the conspirators, who again extended an invitation to Abdali. Nur-ud-Din Khan Bamezai, a veteran general in the army of Abdali, was deputed this time to effect the conquest of Kashmir. Sukh Jiwan also made mighty preparations to meet him, and waited for him near Cheraudar on Tosa Maidan side. But just when the battle was on, the commander of his forces, Bakhat Mal,[8] a Hindu, joined the other side. This disheartened the Raja. He left the field, but was soon caught while running away. His eyes were taken out and he was imprisoned.

Sukh Jiwan was brave with a rare capacity for organization. Judging from the standard of the times, his methods were both humane and just. His name is even now a household word in Kashmir, where good old people are seen making reference in their daily parlance to *wakht-i-sukhaju*, meaning thereby 'the good old days of Sukh Jiwan'. His reign came to an end in the year 1762 A.D. Henceforth, the real Afghan rule begins in Kashmir.

8. Anand Ram Pahalwan in his *History of Kashmir* calls him Qandahari Mal.

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13

PANDIT KAILASHA DHAR COMES TO POWER

AFTER THE defeat of Raja Sukh Jiwan, Nur-ud-Din Khan set himself upon the task of establishing peace in the country. The leadership of the Pandits was in the hands of Pandit Kailasha Dhar, whose statesmanship and skill for organization was of a very high order. He organised the Pandits into a force, with the result that the prospective candidates for the *subedar*-ship began seeking their help. Buland Khan Sadozai, one of the candidates opened negotiations with the Pandits and succeeded in winning their support. Pandit Kailasha Dhar who wielded a lot of influence even with the Durrani overlord succeeded at last in getting Buland Khan appointed as *subedar* of Kashmir in 1762 A.D.[1] Under these circumstances it was but natural for Pandit Kailasha Dhar to add greatly to his prestige, and it is said that he amassed a lot of wealth.[2]

Buland Khan had smooth sailing in Kashmir, but one episode that happened at the close of his reign disturbed the otherwise calm atmosphere that had prevailed till then. On an altercation with a few Shias, the huge Muslim mob fell upon Zadibal,[3] and indulged freely in an orgy of loot and plunder, arson and murder. On inquiry, the *subedar*, who

1. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir*.
2. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir*.
3. This is the main Shia locality in Srinagar.

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was a Sunni, found the Shias guilty and ordered 'suitable' penalties to them such as the cutting of their noses, ears, etc.

Buland Khan Sadozai did not remain long in Kashmir, and was succeeded by Nur-ud-Din Khan Bamezai in the year 1764 A.D. By this time the Afghan rule had become well established in the country. But it seems that the Afghans had well profited from the experience of Sukh Jiwan, and therefore did not place an undivided trust in the intriguers of a former regime. It has been stated by George Campbell that

> the valley never belonged to the Afghan nation but was retained as a crown appendage of the kings who were very jealous of admitting into it subjects whom they might find difficult to turn out again and much preferred to govern with the Pandits.[4]

Nur-ud-Din Khan, after the assumption of his office, set upon the task of choosing his *madar-ul-miham* (chief minister) and *sahibkar*. Mir Muqim Kanth, to whom reference has been made more than once, had a rare capacity for intrigue, and also wielded an influence in the country which could not be ignored by even the *subedar*. But, with all this, the *subedar* could not place undivided trust in him. The result was that while he appointed him as his *madar-ul-miham*, his choice for the appointment of *sahibkar* fell upon Pandit Kailasha Dhar.[5] The appointment of Pandit Kailasha Dhar to the post of *sahibkar*, which was as responsible a post as that of *madar-ul-miham* did not find favour with Mir Muqim Kanth. Pandit Kailasha Dhar was once in the personal service of the Kanths.[6] Mir Muqim Kanth took it as an insult to him that the leader of the rival group should become his colleague with equal

4. Campbell, George, *Ethnology of India*.
5. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 664.
6. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 664.

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powers. But he kept silent over it, and the embers of dormant enmity between the two notables kept on smouldering for some time, when a quarrel ensued between Pandit Kailasha Dhar and a distant cousin of his, Chatura Pandit Dhar,[7] over the distribution of their family *jagirs* that were once confiscated and later on released. Mir Muqim Kanth thought that the time was ripe for striking the Pandit. He sided with Chatura Pandit Dhar, and succeeded in releasing half the *jagirs* in favour of Chatura Pandit Dhar. During those very days one evening Kewal Pandit, who was a son of Chatura Pandit Dhar, was coming back from the house of Nur-ud-Din Khan at Nawab Bazar in company with Mir Wali, a nephew of Mir Muqim Kanth. When these gentlemen reached Nawa Kadal, some persons jumped upon them from behind and murdered both of them, then and there.[8] Naturally, the suspicion fell upon Pandit Kailasha Dhar and his cousin Pandit Mahananda Dhar. Either for want of proof or because of their great influence no attempts were made in any way to have them brought to books. But the enmity between the two rivals for power increased day by day with the result that impediments began being placed by Mir Muqim Kanth in the smooth working of the departments in the charge of Pandit Kailasha Dhar. The Pandit was responsible for revenue collections which were till then done twice a year. But Mir Muqim Kanth somehow secured an order from the *subedar* which provided that the collection of land revenue should be made monthly. Although Pandit Kailasha Dhar had to face many difficulties under this arrangement, yet somehow or the other he pulled on for some time when by dint of a subsequent order, he was required to make daily collections.[9] This order was

7. Fauq, *Tarikh-i- Aqwami Kashmir.*
8. Fauq, *Tarikh-i- Aqwami Kashmir.*
9. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 664.

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unworkable in practice and greatly detrimental to the smooth working of revenue administration. By such means, Mir Muqim Kanth tried to bring about the failure of Pandits' administration. Their enmity went on increasing day by day when, at last, nature came, to the rescue of the Pandit for the time being. Mir Muqim met with his death in the circumstances, rather strange. Nur-ud-Din Khan took fancy to a handsome Kashmiri girl and put her in his harem. This action of his created a great resentment in the minds of the people. In a body, they went to Mir Muqim's house, and asked him to intercede in their behalf with Nur-ud-Din Khan and set the girl free. Nur-ud-Din Khan had expected Mir Muqim to side with him, but he became greatly resentful to find that Mir Muqim not only sided with the people, but even fanned the flames of agitation. The best way to put an end to this agitation he thought was to put an end to Mir Muqim first. This he manoeuvred in such a clever manner that not only was Mir Muqim killed, but the suspicion of this dastardly act fell upon Pandit Kailasha Dhar who was got involved in this affair to cloud the original issue, and to prepare the two communities to fight against each other. In this he succeeded amazingly well. People forgot all about the abduction of the girl and, in its stead, the talk of the day became the murder of Mir Muqim. The matter did not stop here. This incident served as a spark to bring about a conflagration of dire calamities for the Kashmiri Pandits in the near future. But, for the time being, all went well with them. Hakim Mir a *qanungo* of Khuihama (the *jagir* of Mir Muqim) who had a long standing grievance against Mir Muqim was called by Nur-ud-Din Khan. Nur-ud-Din conspired with him to murder Mir Muqim. It was settled that Hakim Mir would enter the house of Mir Muqim during the night and shoot him dead. Nur-ud-Din gave him a *tapancha* (a small rifle) with Pandit

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Kailasha Dhar's name inscribed on it and impressed on him to leave the *tapancha* there after he had shot him. Mir Muqim was murdered in the proposed manner, and the next morning

Note: Hassan the Kashmiri historian, who wrote his History of Kashmir about eighty years back, gives a different version of the whole affair but he does not seem to have proved the facts deep enough, and appear to have been swayed more by the prevailing public sentiment of the times. He says that the "enmity between the Pandit and Mir Muqim Kanth having gone increasing day by day Pandit Kailasha Dhar made preparation in right earnest to make his work short and thus remove all obstacles from his path. He summoned a person name Hakim Mir who was a *qanungo* of Khuihama, and conspired with him to murder the troublesome Kanth. It was arranged that Hakim Mir would find entrance into the house of Mir Muqim during the night and shoot him there. Pandit Kailasha Dhar gave him his own *tapancha* on which his name was inscribed. One night Hakim Mir entered the house of Mir Muqim and shot him dead, but feeling nervous the *tapancha* dropped from his hands. Next morning when the *tapancha* with Pandit Kailasha Dhar's name inscribed on it was found the public believed that Pandit Kailasha Dhar was a party to this dastardly outrage". But this version cannot stand the test of close reasoning. In the first instance, Pandit Birbar Kachru is undoubtedly an older historian who wrote his history soon after the occurrence. Naturally enough, he is expected to know facts much better than a historian who wrote his account after more than a century. Secondly, it could hardly be expected of an astute Pandit like Kailasha Dhar to give his own *tapancha* to Hakim Mir and that too with his own name inscribed on it and thus create suspicion against himself. Thirdly, it can never be believed that the *subedar* would have allowed Pandit Kailasha Dhar to go scot free, if he had believed in the guilt of the Pandit. Mir Muqim was in no way less influential than the Pandit, and there was no love lost between the *subedar* and the Pandit. It hardly stands to reason that no action would have been taken against the Pandit, if it were seriously believed by the *subedar* that he was the murderer of Mir Muqim. Fourthly, in no age or country have murderers been looked at with favour. If the belief in his guilt had persisted in the public mind, the Pandit would have fallen in the estimation of the people, and his subsequent rise would never have been possible. But anyhow the belief in the minds of the Kanths in his guilt remained ever so fresh, and it is from this that the later historians have taken their clue.

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when people saw a *tapancha* lying there with Pandit Kailasha Dhar's name inscribed on it, they all suspected Pandit Kailasha Dhar as the perpetrator of this foul deed.[10] Mir Fazil Kanth, the son of Mir Muqim, who was then at Poonch, came hurriedly to Srinagar and laid a complaint before Nur-ud-Din against Pandit Kailasha Dhar as the suspected murderer of his father. Nur-ud-Din Khan did not take any serious notice of the complaint, but in order to ward off the suspicion from himself, he pretended to express his displeasure by imprisoning Pandit Mahananda Dhar and few others.[11]

Meanwhile, Pandit Kailasha Dhar and Pandit Babu Ram Dhar left Kashmir and went to see Abdali, who had then come to Lahore.[12] Mir Fazil Kanth was far from satisfied with the action taken by the *subedar*, and left Kashmir in disgust. After having failed to get help from Poonch, he went to Muzaffarabad and stayed there brooding over the wrong which he believed was done to him by Pandit Kailasha Dhar.

As stated above, Pandit Kailasha Dhar and Pandit Babu Ram Dhar, who had gone to meet Abdali at Lahore, apprised him of what was taking place in Kashmir, how mismanagement was rampant in every branch of administration, and how even the *subedar* became party to mean intrigues. As a result Nur-ud-Din Khan was summoned by Abdali to Lahore. In pursuance of the summons, Nur-ud-Din Khan left Kashmir in the year 1765 A.D., leaving his nephew, Jan Muhammad Khan, to carry on the administration of the country.

10. Kachru, Birbar, *History of Kashmir*.
11. Kachru, Birbar, *History of Kashmir*.
12. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir*.

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14
PANDIT KAILASHA DHAR AND CONQUEST OF KASHMIR

AFTER NUR-UD-DIN Khan had left, disorder again set in the country. Lal Muhammad Khan, a *jagirdar* of Biru[1] (where he had built a strong fort) and a trusted servant of Nur-ud-din Khan truned traitor and, having defeated Jan Muhammad Khan, became himself the ruler of the country. His rule, however, did not last longer than six months, but even during these six months, he took all possible measures in dealing a terrible blow to the Kashmiri Pandits, whom he nearly wiped out of existence. After Pandit Kailasha Dhar had gone out of Kashmir, the Pandits were left without a leader and disorder began to creep in their ranks. The influence that they had commanded and the power they had gathered in the past waned considerably. But they were generally believed to possess enormous wealth. Lal Muhammad Khan knew that he could not maintain his position without ceaseless fighting. For this he required money which he hoped to force out of the Pandits. The result was that he started campaign of ruthless oppression against them. Loot, arson, and murder were freely let loose upon them, and, besides, they were made to undergo humiliation in various ways.[2] The Shias too got a sufficient measure of trouble. Lal Muhammad was not destined to remain long in power. Ahmad Shah Abdali was apprised of the Lal Muhammad's rebellion, while he was at

1. A small town at some distance from Srinagar, M.A. Stein has identified this place with the District of Bahurupa, ref. Stein, Vol. II, p. 476.
2. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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Lahore. He appointed Khurram Khan to the governorship of Kashmir. Pandit Kailasha Dhar, who also had gone to Lahore to meet Abdali, was appointed as his *sahibkar*. Both Khurram Khan and Pandit Kailasha Dhar started for Kashmir at the head of a powerful army. Lal Muhammad feeling his position insecure left Srinagar and took refuge in his own fort at Biru. Khurram Khan and Pandit Kailasha Dhar made a triumphant entry into the city of Srinagar in the year 1766 A.D., and were acclaimed by the populace as saviours from the tyrannies of Lal Muhammad. Pandit Kailasha Dhar came to be recognized as a great force, and he became all but in name the real ruler of the country. Khurram Khan (though a gentleman) was ease-loving and indolent to a degree. He was also of a whimsical temperament, combining with it a superstitious bent of mind. The result was that all powers of the State came to be wielded by Pandit Kailasha Dhar, who, in addition to his popularity with the people, exercised an enormous influence with Abdali. Yet he had his own enemies. Mir Muqim was dead. But his son, Mir Faqirullah Kanth, was all these years, planning the destruction of the Pandit, whom he believed to be the murderer of Mir Muqim. With the help of Muhammad Khan, a Bomba chief, he planned an insurrection and took possession of the town of Sopore. Lal Muhammad who was till then unsubdued also joined Mir Faqirullah Kanth. Khurram Khan and Pandit Kailasha Dhar also collected some force and started for Sopore to fight Mir Faqirullah Kanth.[3] But, as already stated, Khurram Khan was of a superstitious bent of mind. On reaching Pattan,[4] he came across on the roadside a flock of sheep and goats. The otherwise harmless incident was interpreted by him as a bad

3. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
4. A town near Srinagar [for details see Stein, M.A., Vol. II, p. 481].

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omen. He took into his head that there was nothing but disaster ahead. He turned back from Pattan and, not waiting even at Srinagar, he took Pandit Kailasha Dhar along with him and started for Kabul, leaving the city to the mercy of Mir Faqirullah Kanth and his supporters. Having found nobody to withstand him, Mir Faqirullah Kanth himself assumed the reins of the country's rule in the year 1767 A.D. He started his rule with an announcement of allegiance towards Abdali, and, as a matter of fact, he began to rule in his name.

Mir Faqirullah Kanth is one of the most despicable figures in the history of Kashmir. He was both revengeful and selfish, also a coward. For his self-aggrandisement he enlisted the support of petty Bomba chieftains, but when the time came for his showing a courageous front he acted like a coward, and fled away from the battlefield, leaving the country at the disposal of his own barbarous supporters. As soon as he took the reins of the government in his hand, he turned his attention towards the Kashmiri Pandits. In order to avenge the death of his father Mir Muqim, which he believed was brought about by Pandit Kailasha Dhar, he fell upon the Pandit's co-religionists and began to work for their destruction in a planned manner. The services of a large number of Bombas were enlisted from the neighbouring hilly districts with the sole purpose of teasing, tormenting and tyrannizing the Pandits.[5] Even now people recall with a shudder the atrocities which the Bombas perpetrated upon the Pandits. Each morning a number of Bombas entered the Pandit houses. The inmates were humiliated, put under arrest, and thereafter their houses were set on fire.[6] Those who were arrested were either put to death or given the option of adopting Islam. By such means,

5. Fauq, *History of Kashmir.*
6. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir.*

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about two thousand Pandits were forcibly converted to Islam.[7] A large number of Pandits was also killed.[8] "In short, the methods adopted by Mir Faqirullah Kanth and his Bomba soldiers in tormenting the Pandits baffle all description", so says Hassan, the Muslim historian. The Pandits thus suppressed, Mir Faqirullah Kanth began to feel himself invincible. Low people, who constantly bore him company, added to his vanity by means of base flatteries. He became addicted to excessive drinking, and within a short time broke off his allegiance to Abdali, and refused to pay his annual tribute. This affrontry on behalf of Mir Faqirullah Kanth could not be taken lying down by Abdali, and the result was that Nur-ud-Din Khan Bamezai was deputed a second time for the conquest of Kashmir. With a considerable force, Nur-ud-Din Khan reached Kashmir. Mir Faqirullah Kanth also made a show of resistance, and went out to meet Nur-ud-Din Khan with a Bomba army. A few skirmishes decided the fate of the battle. Mir Faqirullah Kanth, finding himself unable to withstand a strong Afghan army, turned from the battle-field and fled in some unknown direction. His Bomba soldiers, having got nothing to do fell back upon the city of Srinagar and plundered it in a leisurely manner, till it was rescued by Nur-ud-Din Khan. This event took place in 1767 A.D.

Nur-ud-Din Khan started his rule with great promise. He brought all the disturbing factors under control, and established peace with an iron hand. But, not long after, he too conceived notions of independence and refused to pay the annual tribute to the Afghan overlord. Muhammad Khan was appointed in his stead as the *subedar* of Kashmir, but Nur-ud-Din Khan refused to hand over the charge of

7. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 669.
8. Kachru, Birbar, *History of Kashmir*.

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administration to him. The complicated turn that the Kashmir affairs was taking became baffling even for a veteran soldier like Abdali. He sought advice, and Pandit Kailasha Dhar was ready with it. The Pandit, as already stated, had accompanied Khurram Khan to Kabul when the latter had shown a white feather even before the battle had begun, and was staying on at Kabul during the time, when these kaleidoscopic scenes were taking place in Kashmir. Pandit Kailasha Dhar sought an audience with Abdali. He undertook to conquer Kashmir, if sufficient forces were made available to him, and further pursuaded Abdali to appoint Khurram Khan as the governor of Kashmir. The request was acceded to and both Khurram Khan and Pandit Kailasha Dhar started for Kashmir at the head of a huge army.[9] They had hardly reached Peshawar when Nur-ud-Din Khan fled from Kashmir leaving behind him Lal Muhammad Khan to carry on the administration of the country, and to fight Khurram Khan and Pandit Kailasha Dhar as best as he could. Lal Muhammad Khan was nothing more than a marauder pure and simple, and he, under the pretext of making collections for war expenses, started looting all the leading merchants and the Pandits in particular.[10] But before any action was fought, he left the field, and confined himself in his own fort. Khurram Khan and Pandit Kailasha Dhar made a triumphant entry into the city. This event took place in the year 1770 A.D. Pandit Kailasha Dhar was now at the height of his glory. His popularity was unbounded. He had proved himself as a liberator of the people from the tyrannies, which had been inflicted upon them in no distant past. But alas! the high hopes that the people had about their future proved to be a

9. Fauq, *History of Kashmir;* Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 671.
10. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 671.

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mirage, and again the people had to plod their weary way through a desert of mis-rule in which the triumphant entry of Pandit Kailasha Dhar was proved to be a solitary oasis of no permanent value.

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15
MURDER OF PANDIT KAILASHA DHAR

KHURRAM KHAN succeeded in installing himself as the *subedar* for the second time in the year 1770 A.D. In this, his sole supporter, guide and friend was nobody but Pandit Kailasha Dhar. But Khurram Khan was of a very weak clay. The weakest spot in his character was his opportunism, which resulted in his unfaithfulness towards his own royal friends, who counted no sacrifice too great to further his cause. Pandit Kailasha Dhar was one of them. Not only did the Pandit leave his hearth, home and his dear ones behind to give company to Khurram Khan to such a distant place as Kabul, but also helped him, in no small measure, in retrieving his lost honour. But how does Khurram Khan repay him the debt of gratitude under which he was placed by the Pandit? Pandit Kailasha Dhar was the rightful claimant for the post of the prime minister. He had by his services proved himself fully worthy of Khurram Khan's trust. But, on his part, Khurram Khan proved himself devoid of that human virtue which demands of a person's fidelty to one's loyal friends. Khurram Khan appointed Mir Hassan Kanth as his *peshkar*, knowing fully well the enmity that existed between the Kanths and the Pandit. This greatly impaired the dignity and prestige of Pandit Kailasha Dhar, but Khurram Khan had to pay a dearer price for his perfidious conduct towards one, who did not hesitate to stake all to raise him up from the mire of disgrace to which he had fallen by his own actions. Mir Hassan Kanth was a novice in the art of government. The result was that disorder again set in the country, which neither the Kanth nor Khurram Khan could cope with. Lal

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Muhammad Khan was unsubdued, and he became a terror to the villages adjoining his fort. After much shilly-shallying, Amir Khan Jawansher, who was the head of the army, was sent to suppress him, but his campaign failed, and he returned without achieving anything. After Amir Khan Jawansher's discomfiture, Lal Muhammad Khan was further emboldened and he took his marauding expeditions right into the heart of the city of Srinagar. He looted and laid waste the *parganas* of Bangil and Biru. But Amir Khan Jawansher laid the blame for his discomfiture solely upon the vacillating and weak policy of Khurram Khan and his *peshkar*, and submitted a formal complaint before Abdali against both of them. As a result, Khurram Khan was deposed, and in his stead Amir Khan Jawansher was appointed as the *subedar* of the province in the year 1771 A.D. Khurram Khan, fallen into disgrace, left Kashmir a care-worn and unhappy person, who thereafter was to be heard no more in the history.

Amir Khan Jawansher was an indolent and ease-loving person, and preferred luxuries of a rich harem to devoting himself to the administrative affairs of the country. He appointed Mir Fazil Kanth as his *madar-ul-miham* and virtually delegated all the administrative functions to him. Lal Muhammad Khan, who was unsubdued, again raised the standard of rebellion, and plundered the town of Magam. His brother Saifullah made an attack upon Srinagar, and set fire to the magnificent palaces of Sukh Jiwan situated at Zaldagar in Srinagar. After a few skirmishes Lal Muhammad Khan died a natural death, and with him died his infrustuous rebellion. All opposition gone, Amir Khan Jawansher reverted to his luxurious ways of life with a re-doubled vigour. He built an artificial island in the Dal lake, and laid a magnificent

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garden with palatial buildings.[1] He also built a palace and a fort on the banks of Jhelum river and named it Sher Ghar[2] after his own name. He also constructed the Amira Kadal (bridge).

While Amir Khan was busy with his own affairs, Mir Fazil Kanth also made an unbridled use of the powers that were delegated to him. How could he spare the Pandits? Old scars were revived, and the old quarrel between Mir Muqim and Pandit Kailasha Dhar was to be settled. It has been already stated that the Kanths were, one and all, under the impression that Pandit Kailasha Dhar was at the back of Mir Muqim's murder, and all those years the Kanths were one after another planning the destruction of the Pandit. But the great influence that the Pandit wielded and the vast powers that he possessed, left him unscathed. It was rather the Kanths who were obliged to remain in exile. But thanks to the ill-starred and unwise step taken by Khurram Khan, Pandit Kailasha Dhar was flung to the background. This greatly impaired the Pandit's prestige and power, which afforded a propitious time for Fazil Kanth to wreak his time-worn vengeance. Amir Khan was consulted, and he, it appears, gave his fullest consent to the outrageous act that was soon to follow. On the fateful day, Pandit Kailasha Dhar was sitting in the Durbar Hall when he was abruptly accosted by the vindictive Kanth and felled to the floor. The Pandit thus taken by surprise, could offer no resistance, and before he could collect himself the Kanth unsheathed his sword and struck him dead then and there.[3] His dead body was cast unceremoniously into the Jhelum river flowing close by.[4] Not content with this, the Kanth ordered a search for the

1. Now known as Ropalank [*roph* in Kashmiri means 'silver' and the word *lank* or *lanka* means 'an island'].
2. The fort existed till recently. Even now the secretariat [now known as old secretariat] is located there.
3. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 673.
4. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir*.

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Pandit's family. But, somehow or the other, they had scent of the impending danger and prepared for a secret flight, "All of them, men, women and children, including Pandit Mahananda Dhar who at one time was the prime minister of Sukh Jiwan, secretly left the country and took refuge in the inaccessible mountain fastnesses of Poonch."[5] Other Pandit notables also left the country, and some of them along with Gobinda Pandit Dhar reached Kabul, and stayed there in wait for better times.[6] Thus died Pandit Kailasha Dhar, unsung, unwept and unmourned: a colossal figure in the history of Kashmir, who more than once changed the course of its history. The Pandit was a man of great courage, fortitude and resourcefulness. He was great Persian scholar. Even in the disturbed state that characterize the days he lived in, he found time to lay his offering at the shrine of the Muse.[7] He wrote exquisite Persian verses with real poetic merit.

With Pandit Kailasha Dhar dead, and the other Pandit notables living in exile in far off places, the Pandits were reduced to the lowest level of humiliation and distress. Without support and disorganized as they were, a terrible demoralization crept into the ranks, and it came to be believed that their days were numbered. But it was not destined to be so. Amir Khan Jawansher, sunken into debaucheries of a degraded character, took a bride from amongst the Hanji clan living at Nandapura, a village on the banks of Dal lake. He got himself surrounded by the clansmen of his wife, who made themselves a terror to all. Disorder became rampant in all directions. The affairs went on in such an unsettled manner, when the news reached Srinagar about the death of Abdali. This was in the year 1772 A.D.

5. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir.*
6. Pahalwan, Anand Ram, *History of Kashmir.*
7. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 673.

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16

RISE OF PANDIT DILA RAM

TAIMUR SHAH, the eldest son of Abdali who was, at the time of his father's death, the governor of Kandahar, succeeded Abdali to his vast empire. Taimur Shah continued Amir Khan Jawansher as the *subedar* of Kashmir, and even bestowed the title of *diler jung* on him, a title which of all people Amir least deserved. Amir Khan Jawansher also paid his homage to Taimur Shah and made regular payment of the annual tribute for some time. But, not long after, Amir Khan Jawansher also somehow conceived the notions of independence, stopped the payment of annual tribute and ceased all connection with Kabul. Amir Khan was of Shia pursuasion and, after the declaration of his independence, he encouraged the spread of his faith by all fair and foul means, and also started a ruthless persecution of the Sunnis. The news about the revolt of Amir Khan took some time to reach Kabul, but, as soon as the Shah was apprised of Amir Khan's revolt, he deputed Karim Dad Khan with a strong army for the conquest of Kashmir. It was not a mighty task to deal with a person of Amir Khan's calibre. The result was that Amir Khan was defeated without great effort, his supporters having forsaken him at the nick of time. Deserted by his friends and chief supporters, and with none to fall back upon for succour but the Hanji relations of his ill-fated wife, Amir Khan left the country by abandon it to its own care.

The victorious Haji Karim Dad Khan triumphantly entered the city of Srinagar, and became the *subedar* in the year 1776 A.D. The people of Kashmir, having groaned sufficiently long

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under the tyrannical yoke of Amir Khan, looked upon Haji Karim Dad Khan as a liberator. But it did not take them long to be undeceived. The Haji proved a worse tyrant than his predecessor. He had an aptitude for inventing novel methods of torture, and generally regaled in the suffering of others. In this, he spared none. Rich and poor, high and low, all were made to drink from the bitter cup of his brutal caprices. Not a day would pass when a fine was not imposed upon some person on the mere suspicion that he was rich enough to pay. And the methods he adopted in realizing the fines were no less ingeniously inhuman - infliction of degradation, disgrace and death being the normal methods. Taxes of a fantastic character were imposed upon people. One such tax came to be known as *zari niaz* which was levied upon the *mansabdars* and *jagirdars*. *Zari ashkhas* was the tax imposed upon the trading class. *zari habubat* was another kind of tax that was levied upon the *zamindars*.[1] These taxes, it may be stated, were in addition to the normal taxation. The strain of taxation fell so heavily upon the *zamindars* that they had to cut down their fruit-bearing trees, sell those in the market as fuel to pay up the taxes.[2] But then there were the Pandits too. How could they be spared when an orgy of loot and plunder was going on with unbridled lust and licence all round? Haji Karim Dad Khan did not feel content with only those hardships which the Pandits had to suffer in common with the rest of the population. Somehow or the other, they had to be distinguished from the others for receiving an additional dose of repression. Haji Karim Dad Khan indeed adopted an ingenious method of roping them in. The Haji had a person named Aslam Harkara in his employ, whose duty it was to

1. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
2. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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realize taxes from the people. Aslam was a paragon of ruthlessness and, judging from his exploits, the Haji could not have made a better choice. Even now numerous tales are narrated in Kashmir with horror and disgust about Aslam and his exploits. Haji Karim Dad one day kept Aslam somewhere hidden and gave out that Aslam had been murdered and pretended to believe that the Pandits as a class were responsible for his murder. He said that they were at the back of the conspiracy which resulted in Aslam's murder. This was the signal for the arrest of almost all the Pandit notables, who were all of them placed in close confinement. All amenities of life were denied to them. Not satisfied with this alone, he huddled them up in a closed cell, where he made them inhale cowdung smoke which was kept smouldering there for days together.[3] Besides Prakash Pandit Dhar, brother of Pandit Kailasha Dhar, who was a prominent Pandit notable, was put to death.[4] After all this, it is no wonder if the Pandit notables agreed to secure their freedom on payments of a collective fine of fifty thousand rupees annually. This fine came to be known as *zariduh* .[5]

From the account it becomes abundantly clear that no pains were spared by the Haji in making it veritable desert of the nature's most favoured tract on earth. The result was that trade dwindled immensely, agriculture was neglected, and most people left their country in sheer disgust and settled in different parts of India. Those who remained behind, dragged their miserable existence more dead than alive. But then a benevolent providence came to the succour of the people.

3. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 684.
4. A supplement to Narayan Kaul's *History of Kashmir* by Anand Ram Pahalwan.
5. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*; see also Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 684.

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The evil had now transgressed such limits when, according to the accumulated wisdom and experience of ages, good invariably comes out of it. There appeared, on the political stage of the country, a personality who turned a new leaf in the desolate and dreary chapter earlier opened by Haji Karim Dad Khan in the history of the country. His name was Pandit Dila Ram, who was appointed as his *sahibkar* by Haji Karim Dad Khan. Pandit Dila Ram was a man of high calibre, a giant amongst men, who combined in himself all the qualities of a successful statesman. And Pandit Dila Ram undoubtedly proved himself as the one. Firm, resolute, calm and with an abundant store of wit and humour, he held his own for a number of years against a number of unholy cliques, that naturally grow wherever the combat is fought on the plane of selfishness and against superior merit. George Forster, who came to Kashmir in 1783 A.D., has recorded his appreciation for Pandit Dila Ram in the following words :

> This person of the Hindoo sect, possessed a more liberal disposition than is usually found in an Indian; though perhaps I am so much biased by his indulgent treatment, that my opinion may be thought partial, but his deportment seemed uniformly benevolent to all classes of people; with his companions he was affable and good humoured, he was humane to his domestics and he exercised with a reasonable temperance the duties of his office.[6]

For the Kashmiri Pandits, Pandit Dila Ram came like an angel with a fresh message of life, and for the country his presence brought about its rehabilitation. Thus we see that even in the Haji's regime Pandit Dila Ram undid most of that mischief which was the creation of Haji himself. And in this he obviously succeeded in winning the consent of the Haji

6. Forster, George, p. 9.

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also. In the light of all that is known about the Haji, this was a great achievement indeed. But then the Pandit proceeded with great caution, as he knew fully well that he had to conduct the affairs with a monster at the helm. Pandit Dila Ram, like a true statesman, made a full study of the existing conditions obtaining in the country. He found that the reign of terror that was started by the Haji had killed all the initiative in the people, and the world renowned industries of Kashmir were well-nigh on the verge of destruction. The famous shawl industry was decaying. The shawl weavers left their profession in sheer disgust, for it paid them nothing in return. There was no wealth left in the country, and there were no purchasers to buy the articles produced. What little income they made out of it went to the coffers of the Haji in the shape of the exorbitant taxes levied by him. Then, it is no wonder then that the shawl industry came to a stand still. Pandit Dila Ram paid serious attention to this. He called the shawl weavers together, and by dint of various concessions made them resume their work.[7] One of their pressing grievances was that, on a single shawl prepared by them, they had to pay the tax several times over as long as a shawl remained unsold. Any concerned State official could realize the tax on it as many times as he liked for the simple reason that no receipts were issued. All the prayers and protests of the weavers went in vain. Besides, the tax itself was very exorbitant. Pandit Dila Ram realized this hardship of the weavers. He introduced the method of affixing a *dag* (a stamp mark) on each shawl for which a tax was paid, in token of its payment. This came to be known later on as *dag* shawl, and the concerned

7. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir*; also Diwan Kripa Ram, *Gulzar-i-Kashmir* (in Persian).

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department was also called by the same name.[8] Regular accounts were maintained henceforth, and the possibility of undue harassment of the poor weavers was reduced almost to nil. The exorbitance of the tax on shawl weavers did not escape his attention. He reduced the tax to an *anna* per rupee of the sales price.[9] All this had the desired effect. The shawl weavers, freed from the yoke of unbearable taxation and the harassment of the tax-collectors, devoted themselves to their art with great zest, and the industry flourished day by day.

Having dealt with the shawl industry, Pandit Dila Ram turned his attention towards the general welfare of the nation. The agricultural conditions obtaining in the country had greatly deteriorated. There was no incentive for the peasantry to take to land, groaning as they were under the burden of heavy taxation. Pandit Dila Ram abolished all those unnecessary taxes that had made the life of the peasantry unbearable. All the taxes such as *zari niaz*, *zari habubat* and *zari rasadat* were abolished.[10] In order to create a zeal in the famished and half-starved peasantary, the Pandit fixed the share of the government in the produce of the land at one-fourth.[11] Besides, gigantic irrigation schemes were introduced and worked. The rehabilitation of the country was almost complete, and nature seemed to smile gracefully once again upon the unhappy people of the Happy Valley.

Haji Karim Dad Khan, having been freed from the anxieties of his own creation, turned his attention towards

8. The department existed till recently and was abolished in the closing years of Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign.
9. Kaul, Har Gopal, *Guldasta-i-Kashmir* (in Persian); also Birbar Kachru, *History of Kashmir.*
10. Kaul, Hara Gopal, *Guldasta-i-Kshmir.*
11. Kachru, Birbar, *History of Kashmir;* Diwan Kirpa Ram, *Gulzar-i-Kashmir.*

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extending his frontiers. He made an attack upon Iskardu, and had a victory there. The news was received with much applause at Kabul, and Taimur Shah bestowed the title of *shuja-ul-mulk* upon the Haji. Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu made an attack on Kashmir during these very days, but he was defeated and repulsed with great loss. The Kanths, whose propensity for intrigue was unbounded, were suspected of having invited the Raja for the conquest of Kashmir, with the active connivance of certain Bomba and Khukha chieftains. The Haji's vendetta against the Kanths was terrible. They were simply exterminated, root and branch.[12] A number of them were massacred, and many more were flung into jail. At the same time, he deputed Tar Quli Khan with a huge army to chastise the Khukha and Bomba chieftains. But he returned discomfitted. His defeat was ascribed to his inefficiency, resulting in his murder.

Thus ended Haji Karim Dad Khan's regime; he was a Haji in name but a veritable monster in his actions. During the closing years of his rule a devastating earthquake occured in Kashmir, to which were added the rigours of a severe cold-wave which passed over the whole country. Rivers including the Jhelum river and all lakes were frozen, and the sufferings of the people were beyond measure. In the year 1783 A.D., the Haji laid down the reigns of his office, and left them in the hands of his son Azad Khan to carry on the administration of the country.

12. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 677.

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17

PANDIT DILA RAM THE *MADAR-UL-MIHAM*

AZAD KHAN, the new *subedar* was after the fullest pattern of his father. He had a spurring urge from within in a greater degree than his father that goaded him unceasingly on the path of creating fresh troubles and tribulations for his subjects everyday. He always regaled himself in the sufferings of others, and when he had nothing better to do, he at least killed one or two individuals to satisfy his ingrained perversity of mind.[1] By such means, he piled up the number of dead to his credit by thousands. George Forster, the European traveller already referred to and who visited Kashmir during Azad's regime, has described Azad as an 'infernal despot'. The European has mentioned some facts in support of his description which may be given in his own words. Says he:

> While he was passing with his court, under one of the wooden bridges of the city, on which a crowd of people had assembled to observe the procession, he levelled his musket at an opening which he saw in pathway, and being an expert marksman, he shot to death an unfortunate spectator. Soon after his accession to the government, he accused his mother of infidelity to her husband, and in defiance of the glaring absurdity which appeared in the allegation, as well as the anxious entreaties of the woman who had borne him to save her from shame, she was ignominously driven from the

1. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 687.

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> palace; and about the same time, on a like frivolous pretence, he put one of his wives to death. A film on one of his eyes had baffled the attempts of many operators, and being impatient at the want of success, he told the last surgeon who had been called in, that if the disorder was not remedied within a limited time, allowing but a few days, his belly should be cut open; the man failed in his cure, and Azad Khan verified his threat.[2]

But then there was the Pandit *peshkar*, whom even the monster like Azad could not touch. Pandit Dila Ram, as already stated, had carved out an abiding place for himself in people's minds. Azad knew this. He not only continued to bestow his favours on him, but also raised him to the exalted office of *madar-ul-miham* (prime minister).[3] In various matters of state, Pandit Dila Ram wielded an unbounded influence over Azad, but then it was not possible even for the resourceful Pandit to put a check to the orgies of his brutal passions, which asserted their evil without restraint. Soon after succeeding to his father's place, Azad led an expedition against the neighbouring State of Poonch. He was successful, but tarnished his victory by untold miseries and hardships that he inflicted upon the people there. For full seven days, the town of Poonch was subjected to plunder and arson, and then he returned only after having put to death Gobinda Pandit Dhar along with a number of other Pandits.[4]

Azad Khan, after his return from Poonch, became greatly elated with his success there, and he let loose his brutal passions in an unbridled manner which culiminated in greater hardships for his subjects. Gobinda Pandit Dhar's murder

2. Forster, George, pp. 27-28.
3. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
4. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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only whetted his appetite for the Pandits' blood, which he now planned to shed profusely. Elaborate plans were laid out for effecting their extermination, but then they proved more than a match for him. They, somehow or the other, took scent of the impending trouble, and, before any harm could overtake them, most of them including the surviving members of Pandit Kailasha Dhar's family left Kashmir secretly. "Some of them found their way to Poonch, others went to Kishtwar, Rajauri and Jammu, and many more fled to Hindustan."[5] Obviously, all these Pandits were informed by Pandit Dila Ram of the impending peril. But Azad Khan was not a person to be discouraged. There were other Pandit dignitaries who could serve his purpose. One such victim he found in the person of Pandit Gulab Joo Dhar, who was the officer-in-charge of Kamraj division.[6] This division was held in their charge by the ancestors of Pandit Gulab Joo Dhar ever since the day when Jahangir had bestowed it upon Meru Pandit in lieu of his meritorious services rendered by him to the Emperor, when he was taken prisoner by Mahabat Khan while coming to Kashmir. But Pandit Gulab Joo, who had received timely information of the impending trouble from Pandit Dila Ram, thought it indiscreet to remain in Kashmir and made secret but effective preparations to leave the country. His own son, Pandit Birbar, he left under the protection of his own brother-in-law, Pandit Taba Bhat of Anantanag, and his two nephews, Sahaj Ram and Mirza Pandit, he consigned to their maternal uncle's care at Safapur. Himself Pandit Gulab Joo went to Kishtwar, and took refuge with the Raja there. For full three years Pandit Gulab Joo lived in an exile in

5. Anand Ram Pahalwan in supplement to Narayan Kaul's *History of Kashmir*.
6. The area comprised the districts on both sides of Vitasta below Srinagar,cf. Stein, Vol. II, p. 436.

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Kishtwar. At last, he opened correspondence with Pandit Dila Ram, who, finding a suitable opportunity, interceded on his behalf with Azad Khan, and secured his permission for Pandit Gulab Joo's coming back to Kashmir.[7]

Azad Khan was a Muslim by religion, but his Muslim co-religionists fared no better than Pandits. So far as the latter were concerned, they had one saving factor, i.e. Pandit Dila Ram was the prime minister. His presence in the administration, as its head, always served a sort of check upon the brutal orgies of Azad. Besides, whenever a plan was hatched by Azad to deal the Pandits a death blow, there was Pandit Dila Ram to put them on guard. But there were some people who may have found it difficult to defend the co-operation which Pandit Dila Ram extended to a veritable scourage on earth, created for the tormentation of its otherwise innocent denizens. But then, apart from the moral values involved in it, Pandit Dila Ram fully justified his action by the practical results he achieved. Would it not have spelled ruin for the country and his community, if Pandit Dila Ram had allowed an opportunity of at least serving as a brake to Azad's brutalities slip out of his fingers, and should he have in its stead become a mute observer of all the troubles that would have otherwise fallen to the lot of the people of Kashmir? Politics cannot be always judged by the standards of saintless. Pandit Dila Ram proved himself a real politician.

As noted above Azad Khan was a Muslim only. May be that his conception of religion did not rise higher than his actual doings. But at any rate he proved by his actions that he had no respect for religion as understood by the rest of mankind in his time, nor did he feel any qualms of conscience

7. Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir.*

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to deter him from his misdeeds. He made himself dreaded by friend and foe alike. His exactions from his subjects were so terrible that the fruit-growers of Kashmir effected such a grafting in their trees which spoiled the taste of the fruits. By such means alone could they save their fruit from falling into Azad's hands. A person devoid of religion, with no pangs of conscience, haughty, arrogant and vain as Azad was, it was quite impossible that he could continue his allegiance to the Afghan king for any length of time. The result was that soon after his conquest of the Bomba and Khokha principalities, he proclaimed his independence and took the title of Nadir Shah II. So arrogant had he become that he put two Kashmiri notables, Sher Ali Khan and Khwaja Muhammad Ganai to death on the mere suspicion of loyalty on their part towards the Afghan king. News travelled very slow in those days, and it took some time before the Kabul king came to know of Azad's rebellion. Taimur Shah, the Afghan king, instead of taking any drastic measures, deputed Kifayat Khan to bring him round by peaceful methods. Kifayat Khan, who had the gift of a flowery tongue, made Azad understand the pros and cons of his action, and was on the verge of success, when news came that a huge Afghan force had already made its appearance in Kashmir. The negotiations thus having fallen through. Azad Khan also started with a huge army. The two armies met at Muzaffarabad. Azad Khan came out victorious and he returned with a number of prisoners and a lot of war material. The prisoners were, some of them killed at Maisuma and the rest drowned at Nur Bagh in the Jhelum river. His own assistant, Diwan Singh, he put to death at Haft Chinar.

But with all this, Azad had his own anxieties, his own cares, although they were the creation of nobody but of his own. One would have expected that after his victory over the royal forces, he would have had a smooth sailing, but

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then his victory added so greatly to his vanity and arrogance that even his most faithful servants turned away from him in sheer disgust. Pahalwan Khan and Maluk Khan, two of his most trusted lieutenants hatched up a conspiracy for his destruction. They succeeded in winning the support of Izmat Khan, who was in-charge of Azad's bodyguard. One night, Izmat Khan, finding a suitable opportunity fired at Azad, but missed the short. In horror, Azad lept through the window towards the Jhelum river flowing nearby. He took a boat and hurried towards Rainawari, where he took shelter in Pandit Dila Ram's house. Izmat Khan and his party gave him a hot chase, but he reached his destination safely. At Rainawari all of them tried to enter Pandit Dila Ram's house forcibly but failed. In the melee that ensued, Azad Khan remained unscathed though Pandit Dila Ram sustained some minor injuries. The whole night witnessed a number of petty skirmishes between the partisans of Izmat and Azad. Next morning, Azad came out of his place of shelter and camped at Maisuma. Pahalwan Khan also came out with his forces, but not feeling himself strong enough to force a victory, he fell back and took shelter behind the walls of the Sher Garh fort. Azad at once laid siege to the fort. For seven days bombardment continued from both sides. At last, a breach was made in the walls, and Azad's forces rushed in. In the fight that ensued, Pahalwan Khan was killed and with him ended his infructuous rebellion.

But even then Azad was destined to have no rest or respite. Taimur Shah could not sleep over the defeat suffered by his army and, thus, lose a province like Kashmir. Again Taimur arranged an expedition to Kashmir, and this time it was well equipped and put under the command of a veteran General Madad Khan. Azad's star was now on the wane. By his own arrogance, he had lost the co-operation of almost all his trusted

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servants. Those few who had for one reason or the other kept hanging on around him, finding time propitious, joined the other side. But even then his cruelty of temper met with no set-back. Sardar Arsala Khan who joined Madad Khan, was chosen by him for a terrible vendetta. His two sons and daughter were drowned in a river, and the modesty of his wife was got outraged by his own children. But all this had now only one effect that of antagonizing further the people against him. A terrible battle was fought in the year 1785 A.D. near Khushipura village, which culminated in victory for Madad Khan. Azad, crest-fallen, with no friend, and forsaken by all, ended his inglorious career by taking his life with his own hands. Madad Khan with nobody to oppose him made a triumphant entry into the city of Srinagar in 1785 A.D.

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18

PANDIT DILA RAM WINS FRESH LAURELS

dhar tawarikhi yak hazar u dusad
zulmi "azad" ra rasid madad

In the year one thousand and two hundred, the zulum of Azad received *madad* (help).

IN THESE poetic words did the public sentiment find articulation, when the bard in his humour of despair composed this couplet to chronicle the arrival of Madad Khan. Azad had proved himself to be a terror in the past, and the people had lost all hopes in the future. But Madad Khan was of a different frame of mind. He realized that Azad had by dint of his misdeeds greatly lowered the public estimate of the Afghans. He, therefore, decided to turn a new leaf in the dark chapter that was opened by his two predecessors in the history of Kashmir. Therefore he set himself in right earnest to give a healing touch to the lacerated hearts of the people.

Nor did he let the machinations of the mischief-mongers, of whom there was no dearth in the country, go unheeded. He suppressed all those elements with an iron hand. He also made recommendation for the remission of the taxes that were specifically levied upon the Pandits, but they expressed their willingness to continue payment if only they were left in peace thereafter.[1] But

1. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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with all the good work, Madad Khan was not to remain in Kashmir for more than ten months, when he was called to make room for his successor Mirdad Khan in 1786 A.D.

Mirdad Khan made a good start with Mulla Gaffar Khan as his assistant. The Finance Department was put under the charge of Pandit Dila Ram. For some time to come, the affairs went on smoothly. But, there came about a rupture in the harmonious relations that had hitherto subsisted between the *subedar* and his assistant, Mulla Gaffar Khan. Both of them tried to harm each other, and both of them sought the help of Pandit Dila Ram,[2] who kept himself outside all the rival cliques. This naturally added to his popularity among the masses, and greatly enhanced his power and prestige.

The news that the *subedar* and his assistant were not pulling on well with each other did after all reach Kabul. The *Subedar* Mirdad Khan undertook the collection and realization of the land revenue without the help of his assistant, Mulla Gaffar Khan, who was, as a result, removed from office, and Mirdad Khan was given the sole charge of the country. One would have expected that now, as the dual element in the administration had ended, there would be peaceful days ahead, but even this did not in any way ease the matters.

Pandit Dila Ram, as already stated was a man of extraordinary resourcefulness. In the unsettled state that prevailed during those

2. Fauq narrates in his history that Pandit Dila Ram, taking advantage of the jealousy between the two notables, enlisted the Pandits in very large numbers in the government services and thereby harmed the Muslim interests. But Hassan, who wrote his history half a century before Fauq's, does not make even a remote suggestion as regards this. Fauq's comment partakes of the modern trends in Indian politics which enunciate that the interests of a particular community are always unsafe when handled by a person of a different faith.

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days, if there was one man who came out unscathed out of the fiery ordeal, it was Pandit Dila Ram. Azad rebelled against his Afghan overlord. He was made to suffer an ignominous defeat. Afghan rule was again established, but Pandit Dila Ram did not find his prestige or power diminishing even by an iota. This gave rise to a number of enemies of Pandit Dila Ram,[3] who were impotent for the time being to shake Pandit Dila Ram from his position; they nevertheless always planned secretly for his destruction. They waited for an opportune time to strike, which they got, after all, under interesting circumstances. Hafiz Kamal, a Muslim divine in Srinagar, once the chief preacher of the city, was deposed from his office on an accusation of heresy having been brought against him. Having passed a number of years in retirement, at last he came out from his seclusion, and re-started his preachings. He was again accused of using profane language (*tabarrum*). This kindled the fire of a religious upheaval, and people assembled in thousands demanding the head of the heretical Kamal. Poor Kamal was made to ride a donkey, and was paraded through the streets of Srinagar. He was later beheaded at Haft Chinar. This incident was closed so far as Kamal was concerned, but it left behind a legacy of religious commotion, which even after the ignominious death of Kamal did not end. The enemies of Pandit Dila Ram could not have chosen a better occasion to bring about his fall. An accusation was brought against him as well that he too had used profane language with respect to the Muslim religion.[4] This accusation served as a spark in a powder magazine, and the result was a conflagration of the worse kind. People assembled in the Shah Hamdan mosque and the Jama Masjid. After listening to the mischievous harangues of certain persons, in whose breasts lay hidden the enmity against Pandit Dila Ram, they closed the

3. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
4. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. p. 696.

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doors of both the mosques and went to meet the Pandit.[5] An attack was made upon Pandit Dila Ram, who was seriously wounded. He would have met his death, had not the *subedar* arrived on the spot, and pacified the mob.[6] Mirdad Khan took no notice of the accusation brought against Pandit Dila Ram, knowing fully well that the agitation against him was artifically engineered. Within a few days, the excitement subsided, and Pandit Dila Ram went on with his work as before.[7]

During these very days, there was some disturbance in Kamraj, created by one Mir Jaffar Kanth, but it was soon suppressed. Mirdad Khan, however, was not destined to live long. A short while after, he fell ill and breathed his last in the year 1788 A.D. He was succeeded by Mulla Gaffar Khan, but he too was recalled after a period of only four months. Sardar Jumma Khan Alkozai was appointed to succeed him.

Sardar Jumma Khan Alkozai was a man of humane temperament, and more or less justice-loving. He patronised learning, and was a great lover of poetry.[8] He had hardly set his foot in Kashmir, when the country was devastated by floods. Numerous houses were destroyed, and many people were left shelter less. But Sardar Jumma Khan Alkozai coped with the calamity very bravely, and rendered relief to the people, as best as he could.

In those days the accounts from Kashmir were periodically submitted to the Kabul government, and, this time, Pandit Dila Ram assisted by Mir Jaffar Kanth was deputed to present the

5. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 696.
6. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 696.
7. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 696.
8. Munshi Bhawanidas, a Kashmiri Pandit, was an accomplished Persian scholar and besides wrote poetry of exquisite merit. He was greatly patronized by Jumma Khan.

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accounts' statement at Kabul.[9] Pandit Dila Ram was already a known figure in Kabul, and he was very well received by Taimur Shah, the Afghan king. The king was greatly impressed with the regularity of the accounts maintained under the supervision of Pandit Dila Ram. The king taking him in his favour, took all sorts of liberties with him, and put a number of questions to him about the Hindu religion. One day Pandit Dila Ram was sitting in the *durbar* at Kabul, when Taimur Shah rather abruptly inquired of him the reason as to why he had put a *tilaka* mark on his forehead. Quick came the reply that the mark resembling *alif* was an indication of the fact that God was one without a second. The king, in order to baffle him pursued the query further and asked as to why he had annointed his ear tips also with the same substance. Without a moment's thought, Pandit Dila Ram replied that the two marks were in token of two witnesses needed to prove a fact according to the Muslim law (*shari'a*). Taimur Shah put a third question as to why he had a mark on his throat as well. Pandit Dila Ram replied that this mark signified that the person who denies the truth of this statement needs be hanged. The witty repartee over, Taimur Shah bade him to state the true significance of the *tilaka* mark. Pandit Dila Ram read out a Persian couplet in answer which runs as follows:

bar chahram nazr kun peshaniam bibeen
dagi gulamie shahi maulast bar jabin

Cast a glance over my face and look to my forehead, there you will find a mark which singles me out as a slave of the Lord.[10]

Pandit Dila Ram returned to Kashmir laden with honours by the Afghan king. His qualities of head and heart, his rich experience,

9. Fauq, *History of Kashmir.*
10. Shiv Bharat, *Sat daram pracharak* (in Persian).

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his immense store of wit and humour and, above all, his affable manners and mild disposition won for him the friendship of many people at Kabul. But in Kashmir he had trouble ahead of him. There were conspiracies against him. For long did Pandit Dila Ram hold his own against all the unholy cliques of his enemies. But, unsettled as the times were, soon got a propitious time for putting into practice their nefarious designs. Not only was Pandit Dila Ram *Qulli* killed, but the community to which he belonged was also made to suffer those untold miseries the like of which one fails to find anywhere in the annals of the civilized world.

Sardar Jumma Khan's closing years would have been rather peaceful but for the construction of a *matam sarai* by the Shias which was greatly resented by the Sunni Muslims. The building was demolished, and a severe warning was administered to the Shias against their introducing such practices as caused resentment to the Sunnis. There was also an insurrection by Khokha and Bomba chieftains, but it was soon suppressed. Sardar Jumma Khan died in 1792 A.D., and was succeeded by Mirza Khan, who was of a religious bent of mind but did not remain in Kashmir for more than four months. He installed in his place his son, Mir Hazar Khan, and himself became a religious recluse.

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PANDIT DILA RAM'S MURDER AND AFTER

MIR HAZAR Khan, the next *subedar*, created a record of his own perhaps unbeaten in the annals of Kashmir by his most merciless and brutal treatment that he meted out to the Kashmiri Pandits. There had been *subedars* such as Haji Karim Dad Khan and Azad Khan, who disfigured and blackened the pages of Kashmir history by their misdeeds, but Mir Hazar Khan was a category by himself. He was laden with the hatred for the Pandits in an unbounded measure, and the result was that he was not satisfied only with killing them or drowning them in the rivers which he certainly did, but he also chalked out well-planned methods to wipe them out of their existence. But with all this, he failed as the subsequent history records.

Mir Hazar Khan, soon after his assuming the reins of the administration, declared his independence. Taimur Shah, the Afghan king breathed his last, and was succeeded by Zaman Khan, who confirmed Mir Hazar Khan's appointment but at the same time wished Mir Hazar Khan to send the annual tribute to Kabul. There was enough of disturbance in Kabul. Mir Hazar Khan, taking advantage of this state of affairs, refused point blank to make the payment and along with this announced that he would thereafter rule as an independent king. A reign of terror was let loose in Kashmir, which took its first victim in Pandit Dila Ram who was murdered at Khanayar in 1793 A.D.[1] After the murder of Pandit Dila

1. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*; Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 701.

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Ram, a systematic process was adopted for the extermination of the entire lot of the Pandits. A regular Kashmiri Pandit hunt was initiated to buy them over, and various were the methods adopted for their killing.

> Thousands of them were killed by ordinary and known methods. Many more were put in sacks and drowned in the Dal lake, and those who survived were harassed in such a manner that they forgot even Faqirullah's *zulum*.[2]

A number of Kashmiri Pandit notables of Baramulla - a town near Srinagar - were arrested, then humiliated and ultimately put in prison, and later on drowned in the Jhelum river.[3] Realizing that it was futile to attempt the extermination of a whole race, Mir Hazar Khan tried to make the life of the surviving lot both impossible and miserable. *Jazia* was again imposed upon the whole community.[4] Not satisfied with this, he promulgated another equally abnoxious order. The Pandits were strictly forbidden to read Persian,[5] and the penalty for the infringement was certain death. The degrading consequences of the latter order can be understood when we bear in mind that the Persian was the court language and all affairs of the State were conducted in this language. It is a known fact that the Kashmiri Pandits' mastery over the Persian language was second only to the Persians. The result was that they secured an entrance into the administration of the country. But Mir Hazar Khan wanted them to be ousted for all time from the administrative machinery, and this he could achieve with ease, if no Persian-knowing Pandit was available.

2. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, pp. 669, 701; Fauq, *History of Kashmir.*
3. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir.*
4. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 701; Fauq, *History of Kashmir.*
5. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 701.

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But then there were Pandits who continued in service mostly in *daftari diwani* (Accounts Department). He abolished the *daftari diwani*, which was so well organized by Pandit Dila Ram. The Pandits' aptitude for service in the Accounts Department is well known. With its abolition, they were all thrown out.[6] The result was that a Pandit became for the time being a waif, a destitute, a man with nobody to support him or to care for him. But this was as short-lived as the career of Mir Hazar Khan. The Pandit rose yet again. As the news in those days travelled very slow, but the news about the declaration of Mir Hazar Khan's independence, and the *zulum* he perpetrated reached Kabul after all. Zaman Khan, who was busy elsewhere, did not deem it advisable to depute a military campaign against Mir Hazar Khan but in its stead he deputed Mirza Khan, Mir Hazar Khan's father to Kashmir, to bring the latter round by peaceful methods. Mirza Khan tried his best to wean his son from the path he had chosen but failed, and was imprisoned by Mir Hazar Khan. After this, there was no other alternative left for Zaman Khan but to send an army against Mir Hazar Khan. A huge army was sent under the command of veteran General Ahmad Khan. Mir Hazar Khan also started with a huge force, and the two armies met at Baramulla. Before starting an engagement, Mir Hazar Khan brought out of prison all the Pandit notables, who were suffering imprisonment at Baramulla and drowned them in the Jhelum river.[7] Mir Hazar Khan was soon defeated in the battle that was fought at Baramulla. He fled from the scene of action, and took refuge in the Shah Hamdan mosque at Srinagar. He was soon arrested and put in the prison. Thus ended the inglorious career of Mir Hazar who shed the

6. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 701.
7. Fauq, *History of Kashmir;* also see Birbar Kachru, *A History of Kashmir.*

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innocent blood of peaceful and harmless citizens for no other purpose but only satisfying his own perverted desires. Mir Hazar Khan thus beaten, Rahmatullah Khan became the *subedar*. He was not destined to remain long in Kashmir, and was soon after recalled by the Afghan king. He went to Kabul taking with him a Kashmiri Pandit named Pandit Nanda Ram Tiku, who, in course of time, rose to the eminent place of *diwan* at Kabul, and changed the course of Kashmir history more than once. Kifayat Khan now came to succeed him. He was in a marked contrast to Mir Hazar Khan, just, humane and kind, but he too was recalled by the king of Kabul after a short period of three months. There is nothing of importance during his regime excepting a Shia-Sunni riot, which was the result of a private enmity between a Shia and a Sunni notable. Arsala Khan followed next as the *subedar* in 1795 A.D. He appointed Muhammad Khan as his deputy. He also had quite a short-lived career. The past years were a period of total unsettledness which was the legacy left by Mir Hazar Khan. Palace intrigues, marauding expeditions of the Bombas, internecine quarrels of rival factional heads are the main events of those fateful years, which created a veritable hell in the country. Abdullah Khan Alkozai now appears on the scene as *subedar* in 1796 A.D.

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PANDIT BECOMES *DIWAN* AT KABUL

ABDULLAH KHAN Alkozai had a tremendously arduous task to accomplish. There was all round disturbance in the country. Marauding bands of robbers and thieves infested the whole country and nobody found that his life, honour or property was safe. The petty Bomba and Khokha chiefs had become a nuisance in Kamraj, and kept on constantly committing depredations over there, looting, plundering and killing the people. But Abdullah Khan was a man of great courage and organizing skill, and possessed a keen eye for singling out individuals to carry on his administration. He appointed, in preference to other Muslim notables, Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar as his *sahibkar*,[1] and delegated to him all the administrative functions as were necessary to bring about the rehabilitation of the country. Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar was a man of great talent and marked statesmanship, and was devoid of all the vices which sometimes accompany exaltation to a high office. The Pandit engaged himself in right earnest upon the task of the rehabilitation of the country. The army was in a hopeless condition. It could not conduct successfully a skirmish with a neighbouring petty chieftain. Abdullah Khan, with the aid and assistance of the Pandit *sahibkar*, organized the army and subjugated all the neighbouring principalities of Poonch, Kamraj, etc. The Bombas were totally beaten. Agriculture was specially attended to, and after the years of famine and scarcity, people witnessed a bumper crop. The price of *shali* was reduced to twelve *annas* a *khirwar*.[2] No wonder then that Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar became very popular,

1. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
2. Kachru, Birbar, *History of Kashmir.*

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and his fame reached far and wide. The things went on smoothly for some time, when another factor intervened, which broke the harmony of peace and progress which the country had witnessed after a long period of disturbance and oppression.

Pandit Nanda Ram Tiku has been already refered to before, who went to Kabul and settled there. He was a man of great sagacity and tact. He came to the notice of *Wazir* Wafadar Khan, who was then the chief minister of Zaman Khan, the king of Kabul. The *wazir* took Pandit Nanda Ram Tiku in his service. Gradually, he rose to the exalted position of *diwan* at Kabul. He is credited with having struck once coin in his own name with the inscription, *"sim az mabud wa zarb az nand ram."* This rupee was known as 'Nanda Rami rupee' and was in circulation in the tribal areas till at least 1910 A.D.[3] A number of Kashmiri Pandits now settled in Kabul, chief amongst whom, besides Pandit Nanda Ram Tiku, was Pandit Daya Ram Kachru *'Khushdil'*, the father of Pandit Birbar Kachru the historian. Pandit Nanda Ram Tiku had a brother residing in Kashmir, whose name was Pandit Haradas Tiku. By dint of his brother's influence, Pandit Haradas Tiku came to be reckoned as a most important figure in Kashmir. The annual tribute was sent to Kabul through him, and he lived a life of great pomp and power.[4] It was not unnatural that his relations with the *subedar* became strained. Pandit Haradas Tiku apprised his brother of this, and he at once got an order issued from the king, calling Abdullah Khan to Kabul. Abdullah Khan, on arrival at Kabul, was imprisoned at the Bala Hazar fort at the suggestion of Pandit Nanda Ram Tiku.[5] Abdullah Khan had left his brother Atta Muhammad Khan to conduct the administration in his absence, but another brother of his, Vakil Khan, secured an appointment

3. *Qaidi Yagistan*; see also Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir*.
4. Kachru, Birbar, *A History of Kashmir.*
5. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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order from the king, and accompanied by a huge force came to Kashmir. On the instigation of his brother, Abdullah Khan, Atta Muhammad Khan gave battle to Vakil Khan, defeated him and killed him. Along with this he put Pandit Haradas Tiku in prison. It was during these unsettled days that again a Shia-Sunni riot took place, in which untold miseries were inflicted upon the Shias. Their houses were burnt, property looted and many of them were killed. In the meanwhile, Kabul witnessed a great deal of unrest due to the rebellion of Muhammad Shah. Abdullah Khan took advantage of this disturbance, and secured his release from the prison by offering a huge bribe to his jailor. He at once hurried towards Kashmir and, on arrival here, he started as an independent ruler. *Shuja-ul-mulk* who had by now wrested the throne of Kabul from Muhammad Shah tried to win over Abdullah Khan by persuasion and reasoning, but, having failed, he at once sent Sher Muhammad Khan with a huge army to teach Abdullah Khan a lesson. Abdullah Khan also made mighty preparations to meet the royal forces, but was finally defeated and killed. During the later period of the rule of Abdullah Khan, there occurred a very severe earthquake in Kashmir, which resulted in a great deal of damage of life and property. Huge craters appeared on the earth's surface which engulfed many lives. This was followed by devastating floods, which (besides taking a sufficient toll of human life) rendered many thousands homeless. As if all this was not sufficient, the wrath of nature further manifested itself in a most severe winter. The Jhelum river and all the lakes became a solid mass of ice. Abdullah Khan having been defeated, Sher Muhammad Khan remained in Kashmir for about five months, restoring order and setting other matters right. He got his son, Atta Muhammad, appointed as *subedar* in 1807 A.D. and himself left for Kabul.

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PANDIT SAHAJ RAM DHAR - THE *DIWAN*

AMONGST ALL the Kashmiri Pandits who rose to prominence during the Afghan period in Kashmir history, there was the personality of Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar who by dint of his farsightedness, sagacity and political wisdom, continued at the helm of affairs for a very long time. Kingships rose and fell in Kabul, *subedars* were appointed and dismissed in Kashmir, rebellions occurred one after the other in Kashmir, but Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar continued in his office throughout with his power and prestige undiminished. One day we find a loyal *subedar* appointing him as his *madar-ul-miham*, the next day the *subedar* turns a rebel, but Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar continues as before. The rebel *subedar* is defeated and replaced by a loyal one, but Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar continues to be there and wins fresh honours and prizes. And this goes on for a number of years and during the reigns of many *subedars*. In this manner, he could be compared to the French statesman, Talleyrand. But there is one thing which distinguishes Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar from the French statesman in that he was neither faithless nor an opportunist. He never turned a traitor to his masters, but served them, honestly and with loyalty as long as circumstances permitted him to do so, but after their fall he never betrayed them.

In the previous chapter, we have seen how Abdullah Khan appointed Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar as his *sahibkar*. After his rebellion and defeat, Atta Muhammad Khan was appointed as *subedar* in the year 1807 A.D. Atta Muhammad, inspite of the fact that Pandit Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar had sided with the rebel

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chief, Abdullah Khan, in his turn appointed Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar as *diwan*,[1] indeed a high tribute to his integrity and great administrative merit.

The relation of Kashmir with Kabul those days was that of a crown appendage, and periodical accounts had to be submitted to the Afghan king, in addition to the annual tribute. Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar as *diwan* was in charge of the accounts also. We, therefore, find Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar next going to Kabul with the accounts of the country, which were to be presented to the king there. But while crossing the Indus in a ferry the pony which carried the accounts took fright and jumped into the river and got drowned along with the accounts. But unmindful of the loss of the accounts, Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar pursued his journey and, on reaching Kabul, sought audience with the king and related to him the mishap, but he undertook to prepare a duplicate from his memory within a short period of only four days. This was done, and the accounts were found to tally in every detail with the copy of the accounts which was lying in Kashmir, and later sent from there. This pleased the king beyond measure. He bestowed a *khillat* and the hereditary title of *diwan* upon him. Besides, the villages of Dachhan Para and Marhama were bestowed upon him as *jagir* in perpetuity. In addition to this, Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar secured the governorship of Kamraj for his brother Mirza Pandit, and the *illaqa* of Devasar for Pandit Birbar Dhar.[2] The latter, after making his appearance on the political scene, as we shall soon see, played a decisive part in the history of Kashmir.[3]

Atta Muhammad Khan started his career as the *subedar* with great promise. Himself a man of simple habits and deep religious convictions, he bestowed his earnest attention upon raising the

1. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 730.
2. Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir*.
3. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*; Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, pp. 734-35.

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material prosperity of the people of Kashmir. In this, he largely drew upon the administrative skill of his *diwan* Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar. Under the guidance and supervision of the Pandit, agriculture was improved, and during his regime bumper harvests came to be reaped after a period of decay and despair. Trade was revived as a result of administrative stability, which was established in a short period. But then there was again unrest in Kabul. This time Muhammad Shah carried out a successful rebellion against Shah Shuja, who was then the king of Kabul. Shah Shuja escaped, and took shelter with Maharaja Ranjit Singh.[4] The anarchic state of affairs at Kabul had its reactions upon Atta Muhammad Khan too, and, following the footsteps of his predecessors, he also declared his independence. But Muhammad Shah could not take this affrontry on the part of the *subedar* so casually. He deputed a huge force under the command of a veteran General Akram Khan Bamezai, for the conquest of Kashmir. But the expedition led by Bamezai met with total defeat, and Atta Muhammad Khan came back to Srinagar, victorious and happy. He did not remain content only with having scored a victory. He built a fortress on the top of the Hari Parbat hill, and many more in Sopore, Baramulla, and other towns. An ammunition factory was started and the army was reorganized and strengthened. But Kashmir had not vanished from the eyes of Muhammad Shah, the Afghan ruler. Again, he organized an expedition for its conquest - this time under another general of greater fame though not much talented, named *Wazir* Fateh Muhammad Khan. It seems that Atta Muhammad Khan, in order to hide the true purpose of his rebellion under the cloak of bolstering up the claims of a defeated puppet king and also to win support of his partisans in the Afghan country, opened negotiations with Shah Shuja to come to Kashmir. *Diwan* Pandit

4. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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Nanda Ram Tiku[5] was deputed to approach Shah Shuja. Diwan Pandit Nanda Ram succeeded in his mission, and Shah Shuja came to Kashmir only to find himself a virtual prisoner in the newly built Hari Parbat fort. Atta Mohammad Khan now took time by the forelock and deputed his brother Jahandar Khan to seize the Attok fort, which in those days commanded the gateway to Kashmir. Wazir Fateh Muhammad Khan, the Afghan general, did not dare attack the fort and opened negotiations with Maharaja Ranjit Singh for help. The Maharaja agreed to help the *wazir* on condition that an annual tribute of eight lacs was paid to him from the Kashmir revenues. The condition having been accepted, the Sikh ruler deputed Diwan Mohkam Chand with a considerable force to help the *wazir*. In the battle that ensued at Rawalpora village, Atta Muhammad Khan was defeated, some of his close followers having played a treacherous part at a crucial moment. After further feeble and unsuccessful resistance, Atta Muhammad Khan opened negotiations with Diwan Mohkam Chand, and succeeded in getting safe passage back to Kabul. Diwan Mohkam Chand also left Kashmir, but not without taking a *hundi*[6] for eight lacs of rupees.

Wazir Fateh Muhammad Khan did not stay in Kashmir for more than a few months. Accompanied by Diwan Pandit Nanda Ram Tiku, he left for Kabul leaving the administration of the country in the hands of his brother Azim Khan in the year 1813 A.D. Azim Khan then appointed Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar as his *diwan*, and Pandit Haradas Tiku as his *sahibkar*.[7] The latter appointment probably having been made to ward off opposition on behalf of his brother Diwan Pandit Nanda Ram Tiku, who, as has been already mentioned, was a notable figure at Kabul. By this the

5. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
6. Stein, I.v.266.
7. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 730.

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whole administrative machinery was put under the Pandits. Atta Muhammad Khan, on his way to Kabul, handed over the Attok fort to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in lieu of one lac of rupees which the latter paid him. Azim Khan interpreted this action of the Sikh Maharaja as a breach of faith on his part, and refused to pay the annual tribute of rupees eight lac which was stipulated to him by Wazir Fateh Muhammad Khan in consideration of the help which he had secured from Maharaja Ranjit Singh against Atta Muhammad Khan. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was greatly incensed at the unseemly behaviour of the *subedar*, and he at once ordered an expedition to be organized for the conquest of Kashmir. On his part Azim Khan also made strong preparations to meet his formidable foe. But this expedition of Maharaja Ranjit Singh met with a complete disaster. The Sikh forces were routed, and it was with very great difficulty that the main force which was under the direct command of the Sikh ruler was saved from total annihilation. With the Sikhs driven out of the country, Azim Khan returned to Srinagar fully intoxicated with his victory. What repercussions this event had on the general condition of the Pandits will now follow.

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PANDITS AFTER THE SIKH RETREAT

THE DEFEAT of the Sikhs, which was equally due to bad strategy and the wrath of nature, resulted in no distant future in a complete reversal of the previously prevailing administrative policy so far as the Pandits were concerned. It was given out that the Sikh invasion was the result of the Pandit invitation. May be some Pandits had looked on the Sikh invasion as a means to liberate themselves from the Afghan yoke; and this too is possible that a few of them may have actually though clandestinely helped it. But there is no direct proof forthcoming to prove their complicity in this affair, except a strong suspicion, based upon the fact that there were many Kashmiri Pandits, some of them highly placed, at the Sikh *durbar* with whom the Pandits of Kashmir were connected by the ties of blood. The fact that the Sikhs till then were hardly distinguishable from the Hindus must have also contributed towards strengthening such a suspicion. Whether there was any truth in this suspicion, it is a fact that there were people who kept on fanning the flame against the Pandits. The Muslim notables whose power and prestige, when compared to the Pandits, was almost negligible now came on the scene. The abortive invasion of Maharaja Ranjit Singh gave them an easy handle. They dinned into Azim Khan's ears that the Pandit notables were at the root of the Sikh invasion of Kashmir. In particular, they singled out Pandit Haradas Tiku, about whom the allegation was that he was the head of the clique which had extended an invitation to the Sikh ruler. Azim Khan easily believed all this, and

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turned his attention towards the Pandits. Pandit Haradas Tiku was the first victim of this orgy. He was killed in 1813 A.D.[1] There were others too who were similarly treated. Their *jagirs* were confiscated and *jazia* was imposed on the whole lot.[2] Most of them were humiliated and ousted from all places of power, and, in the confusion that followed, a Muslim notable named Nur Shah Diwani was thrown into prominence, and his rise to power proved as shortlived as his mischievous activities abortive. But the treatment meted out to the Pandits, though harsh and cruel beyond measure, did not produce any good result so far as the breaking of Pandit power was concerned. Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar was there at the head of administration, and there were many more whom Azim Khan could not touch. Yet the suspicion about the Pandit's complicity in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's invasion was being daily strengthened.

The rival Muslim clique fully exploited this impression. How could the *subedar* remain safe as long as a Pandit was there? They had to be destroyed root and branch, if Kashmir was to continue as an Afghan province. Such were the arguments which kept his suspicions alive. But even Azim Khan could not dare carry his designs against the Pandits too far; at least, openly, he dared not do so. But Nur Shah Diwani offered to solve the problem in a manner which though clumsy in essence appeared to both of them ingenious enough at least for the time being. It was settled between them that Nur Shah Diwani would invite all the Pandit notables, including Mirza Pandit, the brother of Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar, to his house and, having seated them in a Hamam, suffocate them there to

1. Fauq, History of Kashmir; Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 732.
2. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*; Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 732.

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death by heating the Hamam to its full capacity. Azim Khan approved of this scheme, but said that the deed should be done in his absence from the city. This terrible conspiracy was about to succeed when, on the fateful day, a private servant of Azim Khan apprised Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar of all that had transpired behind the scene between the *subedar* and Nur Shah Diwani. Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar was further told by the servant that Nur Shah Diwani had that very time come to inform the *subedar* that the Pandit notables had assembled in his house. Nur Shah Diwani held a hurried private conversation with the *subedar*, which dealt with the maturity of all his nefarious plans and also the assemblage of the Pandits in his house. With the connivance of Azim Khan's private servant, Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar overheard the whole conversation. The *subedar*, as already stated, was not willing to the perpetration of the crime during his presence in the city. He, therefore, left that very moment for Shalimar garden. Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar also left the place instantaneously in a boat and stopped just on the *ghat* near the house of Nur Shah Diwani. He scribed a solitary line on a chit which ran as: *jazira ki makani tu bud ab girift*. i.e. 'the island on which stood your house is gone under flood waters'. Hayat, a sagacious boatman in service of Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar, was commissioned to carry the chit to Mirza Pandit at Nur Shah's house. Hayat went inside Nur Shah Diwani's house, and kept standing near the door leading to the Hamam. From the unexpected arrival of Hayat, Mirza Pandit divined that there was something extraordinary going to happen. Hayat came forward under the pretence of trimming the wick of the lamp, and dropped the chit near Mirza Pandit who read the chit, but waited for a moment. Without rousing any suspicion, he got up and, leaving his shawl behind, inquired if a privy existed there. Under this pretence, he came out and ran away followed

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by Hayat, and joined his brother at the *ghat*, where he was informed of the conspiracy.[3] After some time, it became known to Nur Shah Diwani that Mirza Pandit had played a ruse and had flown from the trap which was so cunningly laid for him. Confused, confounded and crest-fallen, Nur Shah Diwani sent his own men to fetch him back, but the party returned unsuccessful. Meanwhile the other guests also ran away in the melee that ensued. Next morning, Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar and his brother Mirza Pandit went to Shalimar garden to meet the *subedar* who was all along preparing himself to receive the news about the death of Mirza Pandit and other Pandits. The *diwan* and his brother had a bit of plain speaking with the *subedar*. They related the whole tale to him, how the conspiracy was hatched, how they caught scent of it, how they thwarted it in the middle, and caused it to end in an ignominious failure. They also rebuked him for falling a prey to the machinations of the intriguers, which was simply hastening his own doom. The *subedar* felt very much embarrassed, and readily agreed to abide by any terms which they suggested. Mirza Pandit laid a formal complaint against Nur Shah Diwani who, after the Sikh defeat, was put in charge of revenue collection. The complaint was that Nur Shah Diwani had looted the countryside. Mirza Pandit bound himself to pay rupees four lac if he was allowed to deal with Nur Shah Diwani directly. This was agreed to, by Azim Khan, and Mirza Pandit was armed with a written authority for the arrest of Nur Shah Diwani and the search of his house. A party of Shah Aqasis was put at the Pandit's disposal.[4] Laden with the requisite authority, Mirza Pandit returned, and while he was crossing the Dal lake, he came across Nur Shah

3. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*, see also Krishna Dhar, *History of Dhar Family.*
4. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*, see also Krishna Dhar, *History of Dhar Family.*

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Diwani. At once, he got him arrested and tied his hand and foot with his own turban. On reaching Srinagar, his house was searched but no money was discovered till the carpenter, who had constructed the house, disclosed that the money was concealed inside the ceiling. At once, the house was raised to the ground and the money was recovered. Nur Shah Diwani fell never to rise again, and thus ended the abortive attempt at annihilating the whole lot of the Pandit notables.

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PANDITS AND THE END OF AFGHAN RULE

AZIM KHAN received the stipulated sum of money from Mirza Pandit, and was obviously happy over the whole affair. In token of his pleasure and also to wash off the bitter memory of his complicity in a base conspiracy against the Pandits, he appointed Mirza Pandit, Pandit Birbar Dhar and Pandit Sukh Ram Safaya, the three leading Pandits as revenue collectors. All went well for some time when fresh intrigues came to be hatched. The ignominious fall of a prominent Muslim notable like Nur Shah Diwani, at the hands of Mirza Pandit, was too bitter a pill for other Muslim notables to swallow. Yet, for the time being, they were impotent to do anything effective.

It transpired that as revenue collector a sum of one lac of rupees remained due from Pandit Birbar Dhar. This sum could not be realized from the *zamindars* as a major portion of the crops had remained unripe due to bad weather. But the *subedar*, perhaps under the pressure exerted upon him by some interested people from behind the scenes, pressed hard upon Pandit Birbar Dhar to make the payment. Pandit Birbar Dhar argued to the best of his power and merit that the failure of the crops was no fault of his, and that the *zamindars* could not be forced to make a payment which was beyond their means; but with all this, he failed to make an effect upon the mind of the *subedar*. At last, in sheer exasperation he spoke at the face of the *subedar* in open *durbar* when the latter was surrounded by his courtiers:

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> *ma khamiye fasl az khudai shuma mujra megiram*
>
> Am I to get credit for the failure of the crops from your God.[1]

This insult, flung at the face of the *subedar*, was more than he could bear, but he did not take any drastic action. The demand upon Pandit Birbar Dhar was continued, and one hundred *qizil-bash* were deputed to his house for securing the payment from him. There was a general consternation amongst the Pandits. They had not forgotten the reprisals which Azim Khan had inflicted upon them on a mere suspicion that they were connected with the Sikh invasion. What were they to do? It seemed that Azim Khan was out to ruin them. A secret meeting was held by them which was attended by almost all the Pandit notables. It was resolved in the meeting that Maharaja Ranjit Singh be invited to effect a conquest of the country. It was also settled that Pandit Birbar Dhar, accompanied by his minor son Raja Kak, shall secretly run away to Lahore and present to the Sikh ruler a petition signed by the Pandit notables, by which an invitation was extended to him to occupy Kashmir.[2] The *subedar* did somehow get scent about the intentions of Pandit Birbar Dhar, and he inquired of Mirza Pandit, if Pandit Birbar Dhar had planned his flight from the country. Mirza Pandit denied the truth underlying his suspicions, and even stood surety for Pandit Birbar Dhar's stay in Kashmir. *subedar* thus satisfied, Mirza Pandit went to Pandit Birbar Dhar and told him that time was ripe for his flight and any further delay would spell ruin. In consequence, Pandit Birbar Dhar left Srinagar along with his minor son Raja Kak and, having stayed at Devasar

1. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*; see also Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 734.
2. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*; Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 734.

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for sometime, he effected a secret flight and crossed the Pir Panchal with the help of the local Muslim Maliks.[3] The news about his flight could not remain a secret for long, and in due course reached the *subedar* also. Pursuit parties were organized and sent after Pandit Birbar Dhar but they returned unsuccessful. Attention was turned towards the Maliks who had helped Pandit Birbar Dhar to cross the Pir Panchal pass. Some of the Maliks were killed, their houses were burnt to ashes, and their property looted. But all this went in vain. Pandit Birbar Dhar safely crossed the pass. Mirza Pandit was summoned. And the dialogue that ensued between the *subedar* and Mirza Pandit is given here in extenso:

> *Subedar:* Where is Birbar?
>
> Mirza Pandit: I do not know.
>
> *Subedar:* I hear that he has run away.
>
> Mirza Pandit: May be that he has run away.
>
> *Subedar:* What will he do if he had run away?
>
> Mirza Pandit: If he feels disgusted with the world's ways, he might turn a recluse and go to Ganges to practise his austerities there, or else he will bring the Sikhs on you.
>
> *Subedar:* What do you advise?
>
> Mirza Pandit: Killing of Mirza Pandit.
>
> *Subedar:* What about the money due from Birbar?
>
> Mirza Pandit: Debit it in the name of Mirza Pandit.

This dialogue is given verbatim from Hassan's history which was written a little less than a century ago, and is fully

3. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*; Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 734.

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corroborated by other historians. At the time Hassan wrote his history, there must have been many people living who were eye-witness to all this.

But far from being satisfied with these answers, the exchange only added fire to the burning rage of the *subedar*. Totally upset and, in sheer exasperation, he began to plan fresh reprisals against Pandit Birbar Dhar and his family. Pandit Birbar Dhar having gone away beyond his reach, the *subedar* turned his attention towards his lady-folk. A search was made for his wife and daughter-in-law but no trace of them could be found anywhere. The Pandits had already foreseen the fate which would befall upon these two ladies after Pandit Birbar's flight, and they were, therefore, kept concealed in the house of a trusted Muslim gentleman, Qadus Gojawari. The *subedar* could not bear all this. He caught hold of Pandit Basa Kak 'Harkara Basha' to trace them out. Pandit Basa Kak knew the place where the ladies were hiding, but he refused point blank to divulge the secret. All sorts of conceivable tortures were practised upon Pandit Basa Kak. For nine days he was made to pay a fine of nine thousand rupees, as a penalty for his refusal to trace the ladies. On the tenth day, his belly was ripped open and he was killed in the most ruthless manner. Yet the ladies could not be found.[4] However the secret could not remain a secret for long. The ladies were traced in Qadus Gojawari's house. Soldiers were deputed to bring them. The ladies were caught. Pandit Birbar Dhar's wife swallowed a piece of diamond on her way to Sherghari, which was the seat of the government. The ladies were produced before Azim Khan. Pandit Birbar Dhar's wife thundered out at the face of Azim Khan that the cruel tortures to which she and other Pandits were being subjected would

4. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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have its effect one day and the result would be the end of the Afghan rule.[5] She had not yet finished when she fell dead on the floor due perhaps to the effects of diamond which she had swallowed. The younger lady was forcibly converted to Islam, and handed over to some Afghan notable, who carried her to Kabul.

But on the other hand Pandit Birbar Dhar was achieving success in his mission. After he had fled from Kashmir, some more Pandits secretly followed him. They all reached Jammu. Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu received them well, and gave them an introductory letter to his brother, Dhyan Singh, who was then the prime minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Little did Raja Gulab Singh know about the drama that was being enacted then on the soil of Kashmir, and in which the Kashmiri Pandits were the chief actors. It was designed by an inscrutable providence only to pave the way for his mastery over this land. Pandit Birbar Dhar, through the kind offices of Raja Dhyan Singh and the help he received from Kashmiri Pandit notables at the Sikh ruler's court, got an audience with the Sikh ruler and laid before him the petition of the Kashmiri Pandits, and further appraised him of all the happenings in Kashmir. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, as has already been recorded, had met with a complete discomfiture in his previous Kashmir compaign, and was therefore not willing to embark upon a fresh campaign about the success of which he was not very sure. But he succumbed to the advocacy of Pandit Birbar Dhar and other Pandits, and ordered the organization and equipment of a considerable force, but not without making Pandit Birbar Dhar stand a surety for any mishap or loss that

5. Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir*.

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might befall. He was asked to leave his only son Raja Kak, who was a minor, behind as hostage. To all this Pandit Birbar Dhar consented.[6]

Pandit Birbar Dhar was negotiating with the Sikh chief, when Azim Khan was busy tormenting those Pandits whom he suspected of being in Pandit Birbar Dhar's confidence. Many Pandit notables were detained in a concentration camp at Nishat Bagh.[7] But when the news came that Pandit Birbar Dhar was successfully negotiating with the Sikh ruler, he lost all nerve and sought advice from Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar. The Pandit pointed out to him the disaster which laid ahead of him, and in particular advised him to send off his harem to Kabul. This was the only way to save them from the fate which Azim Khan had meted out to the wife and daughter-in-law of Pandit Birbar Dhar. In this, the Pandit stood in a glaring contrast to those Muslim notables who by their ill-advised counsel goaded Azim Khan against the Pandits, and brought disaster on his head.

Forlorn and forsaken and disgusted with his own methods, Azim Khan made a request to Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar to accompany the ladies of his house-hold to Kabul. Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar readily acceded to his request and escorted his ladies to Kabul and also carried his property consisting of cash and other articles to that place.[8] Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar returned from Kabul, and in due course Azim Khan also left the country, leaving the reins of the country's rule in the hands of his brother Jabbar Khan, whose career was both shortlived and ignominious. On his way to Kabul, Azim Khan took

6. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*; see also Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 738.
7. Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir*.
8. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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Pandit Suraj Tiku, son of Pandit Haradas Tiku, with him with the hope that some money may be forced out of him. But having failed to get anything out of him, he put the Pandit to death near Baramulla.

In the meanwhile, Pandit Birbar Dhar having consented to all the conditions which Maharaja Ranjit Singh had laid, an army of thirty thousand strong under the command of such veteran Generals as Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, Hari Singh Nalwa, Sardars Jwala Singh, Hukum Singh and Shyam Singh were sent along with him. Jabbar Khan also collected a strong army to meet Pandit Birbar Dhar and his Sikh supporters. The Sikh army encamped at Sidhaw, a Karewa near Shopyan and Jabbar Khan went via Chrar-i-Sharif, where a coloured piece of cloth was tied round his turban as a mark of good omen. The Sikh generals, having heard of the approach of the Afghan forces, ordered a march, and also began to study the enemy forces with binoculars. Sardar Phool Singh who saw a Pathan riding a horse with something strange tied round his turban, inquired of Pandit Birbar Dhar, as to who this strange person was. Pandit Birbar Dhar saw him through the binoculars, and at once recognized him as Jabbar Khan. Sardar Phool Singh aimed his gun at him, and wounded him in his thigh. He would have fallen from his horse but for the timely help he received from a faithful servant of his, who tied him to the horse. There was a general consternation, and the Afghan army fell back in a melee. Some of them left the country along with Jabbar Khan who died at Baramulla, others went into hiding and many more were killed. On the 20th June, 1819 A.D., Pandit Birbar Dhar and his valiant band of Pandits along with the Sikh army made a triumphant entry into the city of Srinagar, and demonstrated to a wondering world, that even a handful of people if actuated by selfless motives, can make even mountains move.

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Pandit Birbar Dhar was a man of a high character and, for him no sacrifice was too great if offered in a right cause. Unmindful of the suicide of his noble wife, forcible conversion and abduction of his daughter-in-law, and death by torture inflicted upon his closest friends and relatives, he pursued his cause with an undaunted spirit, and achieved success in his mission which was to drive out the Afghans from his country. But in his success he did not forget the duty he owed to his countrymen, the majority of whom were Muslims. The Sikhs wanted to plunder the city, but he stood in their way. And when Sardar Phool Singh wanted to demolish the sacred mosque of Shah Hamdan, it was Pandit Birbar Dhar who, at a considerable risk to his life, stood in his way, and made him desist from the course[9] which would have blackened Sardar Phool Singh's name in the pages of history for all time. For this act alone, even if we forget his other achievements, Pandit Birbar Dhar was an upholder of those traditions which have always stood for the Pandits as a bulwark to protect them from the onslaughts of time.

Thus ended the Afghan rule in Kashmir.

9. Fauq, *History of Kashmir;* see also Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 748.

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24

A SURVEY OF THE AFGHAN RULE IN KASHMIR

IN THE preceding pages has been recounted the establishment and the end of the Afghan rule. Also the varying methods which were adopted by individual *subedars* in the discharge of their administrative functions had been described. Some of the *subedars* were harsh and cruel while some were of a moderate bent of mind. But generally they tried to establish an independent rule. It may not be supposed that the Afghans were in any sense of the term religious maniacs fired with a fanatical zeal for the propagation of their faith. Their methods of government were indeed crude, and sometimes very cruel and oppressive, but all this had a political background and not theocratic reasons. George Forster, who visited Kabul in 1783 A.D., says that he observed on his arrival in Kabul a common toleration of religion; the Christians, the Hindus and the Jews openly professed their creed and pursued their occupations without molestation.[1] At another place the same gentleman observes:

> Among the foreign nations who frequent this city (Kabul), the Hindoos chiefly of Peshour (Peshawar), contribute more than any other to enrich it, by a superior industry and knowledge of commerce; and they enjoy under the Afghan government, a liberty and protection, little short of that experienced by the inhabitants of our Indian possessions. The benefits derived by a state from

1. Forster, George, p. 68.

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> the residence of any class of people, usually ensure to them a security of person and property, but the Hindoos of Kabul are indebted I believe, for special indulgence to one of their own sect, who controls the revenue of the Shah, and stands high in favour.[2]

This tradition of religious toleration was carried with them by the *subedars* who were deputed to Kashmir from Kabul. As a result we find that though at times the Kashmiri Pandits as a racial group were very harshly treated, there was no ban on their appointment to any post, civil or military, on the ground of religion. As a matter of fact the history of the Afghan rule in Kashmir remains quite incomplete without mentioning the Kashmiri Pandit. Even during this period of disturbance merchants and commercial agents of most of the principal cities of northern India and also from Turkey, Persia and Tartary[3] were seen in Kashmir. George Forster adds:

> But the heavy oppressions of the government and the rapacious temper of the bordering states, who exercise an unremitting rapacity on the foreign traders, and often plunder whole cargos, have reduced the commerce of Kashmir to a declining and languid state.

with the result that during Moghul rule

> the province contained forty thousand shawl looms and at this day there are not sixteen thousand.

Forster at another place regrets that:

> Since the dismemberment of Kashmir from the empire of Hindustan, it has been subject to the Afghans, who possessing neither the genius nor liberality of the Moghuls have suffered its elegant structures to crumble

2. Forster, p. 73.
3. Forster, p. 20.

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> into ruins and to hold out against them a severe testimony of the barbarity of their nation.[4]

It should be borne in mind that though Kashmir was a province under Afghanistan, there were many small principalities situated between Kashmir and Afghanistan, which were for all intents and purposes independent. This led to the weakening of the link between the two countries with the result that the central authority at Kabul did not interfere in Kashmir affairs as long as the annual tribute was regularly paid, even though a *subedar* may have grievously misbehaved. George Forster explains this state of affairs with the remark:

> But when it is considered that the approach to this remote province, leads through hostile or independent territories that Taimur Shah (Kabul king) is equally withheld from distant enterprise by the accumulated arrears and consequent weakness of his army, to which may be added the fear of domestic treason, and a native indolence of temper, a sufficient cause will be seen for his passive regard to the interior government of Kashmir. Contenting himself with the tribute, he is seldom disposed to control the conduct of a remote governor.[5]

The result of this weak central policy was that almost all the *subedars* deputed from Kabul declared their independence and most of them made themselves responsible for very cruel and oppressive methods of administration. George Forster adds that

> During my residence in Kashmir I often witnessed the harsh treatment which the common people received at the hands of their masters, who rarely issued an order

4. Forster, p. 14.
5. Forster, p. 30

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> without a blow of the side of their hatchet, a common weapon of the Afghans,...[6]

At other place he remarks:

> This extreme rigour has sensibly affected the deportment and manners of the Kashmirians, who shrink with dread from the Afghan oppressions,...[7]

According to the same author:

> ...their manners (of the people) have undergone a manifest change since the dismemberment of their country from Hindustan. Encouraged by the liberality and indulgence of the Moghuls, they gave a loose to their pleasures and the bent of their genius. They appeared in gay apparel, constructed costly buildings... The interests of this province were so strongly favoured at the court (at Delhi), that every complaint against its governors was attentively listened to and any attempt to molest the people, restrained or punished.[8]

From this it becomes clear that the treatment of the Afghans towards Kashmiri, the vast majority of whom were Muslims was very harsh. The Kashmiri Muslims were never enlisted in the army and in the civil administration too they had very little hand. It was held an established rule in the Afghan government to refuse recruitment of a Kashmiri to the army. The army of Kashmir during this period consisted of about three thousand horse and foot who were mainly Afghans. They were seldom paid regularly and sometimes the arrears consisted of even two years's pay.[9] Sometimes for want of better subsistence they lived on water-nuts.

6. Forster, p. 24
7. Forster, pp. 23-24
8. Forster, p. 23
9. Forster, p. 29

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The province yielded a revenue of about twenty to thirty lacs of rupees, out of which a tribute of about seven lacs was remitted to the Kabul treasury.[10] But this account was seldom utilized in any beneficient projects. The Moghul gardens were lying in ruins except Shalimar garden, which was well looked after. Magnificient Moghul palaces near Hari Parbat hill were mere heaps of ruins as the palaces were dismantled, and the stones and other material were used for unimportant purposes. Taking into consideration the decline in trade and commerce, a revenue of about rupees thirty lac was indeed very exhorbitant. The revenue from shawl industry alone was computed at twelve lacs of rupees:

> The price at the loom of an ordinary shawl was from eight to twenty rupees according to the quality of its work, though shawls worth a hundred rupees were also manufactured. As already noted the best paper in the East was manufactured here and a wine 'resembling that of Madira' was produced here which possessed excellent quality. Essential oils from roses were held in great estimation and yielded a yearly income of more than a lac of rupees. Of the minerals, iron of an excellent quality was found here. There were other industries which on account of the lack of encouragement were languishing.[11]

At another place George Forster says:

> The rupee is the current coin of Kashmir and that struck in Moradabad in Rohilkhand is held in great estimation. From the baseness of the silver a large discount is allowed on that of Kashmir. Copper money of the value of a half penny and cowries, a small marine shell, compose the other currency of this province.[12]

10. Forster, p. 29
11. Forster, p. 19
12. Forster, p. 38 f.n.

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George Forster has many harsh words for the Kashmiris. But in spite of all that he had to say in their condemnation he had to admit that even during those days of wanton cruelties and despotism:

> The Kashmiris are gay and lively people, with strong propensities to pleasure. None are more eager in pursuit of wealth..... or who devise more modes of luxurious expense. When a Kashmirian, even of the lowest order, finds himself in possession of ten shillings, he loses no time in assembling his party and launching into the (Dal) lake, solaces himself till the last farthing is spent. Nor can the despotism of an Afghan Government, which loads them with a various oppression and cruelty, eradicate this strong tendency to dissipation, yet their manners, it is said, have undergone a manifest change, since the dismemberment of their country from Hindustan.[13]

The lot of the Kashmiri Pandits when compared to other people was indeed happier. Though at times they were very harshly treated, yet the political power was generally and largely centred in their hands. The local bureaucracy was manned by them and some of them were employed in offices even at Kabul. Others engaged themselves in trade and commerce, and did good business both in Kabul and Kashmir. Whenever they found political firmament overcast with adverse clouds, they at once hurried to Kabul where they were always very well. They stayed there till the return of better times. Along with this they had acquired a spirit of adventure which carried them to all parts of India: from Mir Jaffar's Bengal in the East to Nizam's Hyderabad in the south. The Kashmiri Pandits had made their home everywhere. William Moorcraft, who came to Kashmir in 1822 A.D., found the

13. Forster, p. 23

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Pandits as the highest officers in petty Muslim principalities between Kabul and Kashmir. At Kathai,[14] he found a Kashmiri Pandit, Nidhan Kabu, with a huge *tilaka* mark on his forehead, incharge of the administration in the principality. Even in the transborder tribal areas there were Kashmiri Pandits. George Forster, while going to Kabul in 1783 A.D., was held up by a band of Afghan marauders near Dicka, a border district of Afghanistan, when a Kashmiri Pandit came to his rescue. He says:

> ...not finding anything of value (on my person) they were proceeding to treat me with violence, when a Hindu of the family of the *diwan* of Kashmir (Pandit Dila Ram), who had known me in that country, interposed his good offices and proposed a ransom for my releasement. This generous Hindu,... exerted so much warmth in my behalf and spoke so urgently to those marauders, that one of them gave a severe blow on the face. He did not, however desist but by an active perseverance, supported by a small sum of money, he accomplished his purpose.[15]

The social system of the Pandits was peculiar to themselves. They had evolved their own customs and a ritual very rich in detail for their guidance in matters pertaining to marriages and *yagnyopavita* ceremonies. These customs were followed by them all over India and, even now, these customs are followed with a slight variation. They never married outside their caste and seldom ate food prepared by a non-Pandit. But inspite of this isolationism in social matters, they fully imbibed the spirit of times. They used, even in their private communications, *Hijiri* era, month and dates, and carried their seals with themselves wherever they went. Their

14. Moorcroft, William, *Travels*, Vol. II, pp. 283-284.
15. Forster, p. 56

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religious functions they performed according to the Hindu calendar.

The scholarship of the Pandits in Persian reached its high watermark during this period. They wrote exquisite poetry in Persian and there were master writers in prose. Munshi Bhawani Das stands prominent amongst the prose writers of the day. So also Lachhi Ram Saroor who rose very high at the court of the Nawabs of Oudh mainly because of his high poetical merit. *Rai rayan* Pandit Anand Ram Karihalu a great poet was a favourite of Shah Alam II. He was also a great Persian and Arabic scholar. So also Pandit Taba Ram Turki (1776-1847 A.D.), Pandit Sat Ram Baqaya, Pandit Daya Ram Kachru (1743-1811 A.D.), Pandit Aftab Bhan, Pandit Gobinda Kaul, Pandit Kailasha Dhar (died 1772 A.D.), Pandit Lassa Kaul, Pandit Deva Kaul, Pandit Thakur Das, Pandit Gopal Dhar (1735-1798 A.D.), Pandit Raja Kak Dhar, Pandit Raghu Nath Kaul (1735-1807 A.D.) and many others. The contributions made by them to Persian literature have elicited the significant remark from competent critics that in the mastery of the Persian language, the Kashmiri Pandits were second only to the Persians. About Pandit Anand Ram Karihalu it is remarked that his mastery of Arabic and Persian was so complete that even amongst the Muslims nobody could compete with him. Pandit Birbar Kachru (1789-1859 A.D.), to whom reference has been already made, wrote a voluminous history of Kashmir in which he deals with the social and economic conditions of the people in a very detailed and lucid manner. Besides, he wrote good poetry also. Pandit Anand Ram Pahalwan continued the *History of Kashmir* by Pandit Narayan Kaul from 1712 to 1785 A.D.

The Kashmiri Pandits of this period were strictly orthodox, but that did never cripple their minds. In outdoor life they

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behaved at par with any other citizen. The use of words like *banda*, *bandai khas*, *bandai dhargah*, *ahqar*, *ibn*, etc., with their names would show this. Not only that, they even sometimes offered their prayers also in Persian language, and prefixed their gods with such epithets as Hazrat etc. Thus, in a writing of 1155 *Hijiri* era (1742 A.D.), we find:

banda hai gulamani hazrati sharda devi bhawani
barai qadmbos wa gusul dhar kurukshetra raseed

They had indeed eagerness to have a dip in the holy tank at Kurukshetra, but did not hesitate in using expression and style which was not strictly of an orthodox type.[16]

Kashmiri Pandits of those days freely entered military service. They found their way into Muhammadan, Maratha, Sikh and English armies. For instance, in various writings* we find:

(a) *(1) Bandai dhargah Roopchand Parimoo sakini Kani Kadal dar Amli Nawabi Zain Khan Bahadur, (2) Anand Ram Valoo hamrahi lashkari Zain Khan Bahadur dar risalai Qassim Khan, (3) Mehar Chand Kaul sakini Bagdaji minmahlati Rainawari hamrahi lashkari Zain Khan Bahadur.*

(b) *(1) Banda Roopchand, (2) Bhawani Das, (3) Heeraman Pandit, (4) Sada Kaul hamrahi lashkari Muhammad Said Khan Bahadur Rustam Jang Bahadur.*

16. Kilan, Jia Lal, *Kashmiri Pandits in the 18th and 19th centuries*.

***Note:** The writings referred to here are to be found in the old *bahi* of the *Panda* of Kashmiri Pandits at Kurukshetra. It is customary for a pilgrim to write about his arrival in the book maintained by the *Pandas*.

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(c) *(1) Narayan Pandit Sapru, (2) Veshinath Pandit Sapru, (3) Zinda Ram Kaul, hamrahi lashkari Sidique Beg Khan Bahadur.*

(d) *(1) Thakur Das Pandit Sapru, (2) Fateh Chand Kaul, (3) Sobha Shankar, (4) Gopinath Chhachabali, (5) Pandit Daya Ram walad Zinda Ram.* This gentleman bore the title of a *Raja*.

(e) *(1) Raja Sahib Ram Kaul, (2) Banda Bishnath* and *(3) Bhawani Shankar hamrahi lashkari Murshid zada Ifaq Nawab Muhammaduddoullah.*

(f) *Pandit Ganga Ram Bhat hamrahi lashkari Ambajee.*

(g) *Bandai dhargah Ram Narayan Kaul urf Kharu hamrahi Babujee Scindhia Bahadur.*

(h) *Heera Lal Zutshi hamrahi Buhl Sahib kidar aqbi fauji Lake Sahib rawana shuda bud.*

(i) *Krishan Chand Kaul hamrahi lashkari Fraser Sahib.*

(j) *Ajudhya Nath hamrahi Thomas Metecalfe Sahib.*[17]

With a few exceptions, all these gentlemen mention their residence in Kashmir. We also come across a Kashmiri Pandit who puts down his residence as Shahjahanabad, etc. None of them used Srinagar as their residence. The name Srinagar had fallen into disuse, and the city was described by the name of Kashmir. The name Srinagar was revived by the Sikhs after many centuries.

During this period also Kashmir fully maintained her fame for Sanskrit learning. Shri Sundara Kantha, a great saint was

17. Kilam, Jia Lal, *Kashmiri Pandits in the 18th and 19th Centuries.*

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a profound Shaiva philosopher. His disciple, Shri Shivopadhyaya, wrote a learned and lucid commentary on *Vijnanabhairva* which is a treatise discussing one hundred and twelve forms of meditation. It is written in the form of a dialogue between Bhairava and Bhairavi. Shri Shivopadhyaya lived in Kashmir during Sukh Jiwan's reign (1754-1762 A.D.). Reference may also be made to Pandit Sahib Ram who was a great Sanskrit scholar. His profound scholarship has elicited the highest praise from many European scholars, and his works have been referred to by many students of history.

There have been many other Kashmiri Pandits and Panditanis who made colossal contribution to Kashmiri poetry. To mention only two of them, reference may be made to Pandit Paramananda and Shrimati Aranimal. Pandit Paramananda's poetry is primarily devotional saturated with mysticism. But he was not a believer in asceticism or aloofness from the world's cares, anxieties and responsibilities, though his primary aim in life was to seek the 'Supreme Bliss'. In one of his poems, he says:

> Seek first the Supreme Bliss, O Paramananda, Then
> play fresh parts on life's stage, in rags of freshness clad...

In another poem of his, Pandit Paramananda is more explicit. Says he:

> "In this nine-windowed and three-storeyed house,
> The mind looks out now through this gate now that;
> Make fast the smallest outlet, hold him in;
> Then seek the ethereal skies within.
> There shines,
> Eternal Sun who by unborrowed light,
> Illumines the worlds - who rise not
> nor sets,
> The burning breath of love will set
> all things

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Ablaze, like oil will water feed the flame,
The Ego melt to naught - that state is God.
The holy Sanctum seen, one need not be
Confined within, for God who lives
enshrined
In peace within, in Beauty shines without.
Thrown open all sense gates and let the mind
Move freely in or out at its sweet will -
It can't alight where there is aught
but God.[18]

Shrimati Aranimal was wife of Munshi Bhawani Das, an erudite Persian scholar, to whom reference has been already made more than once. Her lyrics are masterpieces in Kashmiri language and the word pictures of delicate sentiments drawn by her are so vivid, real and charming that very few Kashmiri poets have reached the standard set by her. Some of her poems have been set to music and are sung even now by Kashmiri ministrels with great interest and gusto. Some of her poems have been translated into English by Professor J.L. Kaul, a cursory study of which is enough to establish the poetical genius and mastery of technique achieved by that unlettered woman.

Before bringing this review to a close, reference may be made to a fact which would go a long way in proving the breadth of outlook and vision possessed by the Kashmiri Pandits of this period. A number of Shia-Sunni riots were witnessed during this period, but not a single riot took place in which the participants were the Kashmiri Pandits. That the Kashmiri Pandits never gave a cause for grievance to any other community so as to provoke it to a riot must go a long

18. Translation by Pandit Zinda Kaul, popularly known as 'Masterji'.

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and broad outlook of the Kashmiri Pandits. Though at the same time it may be mentioned that in their steadfast devotion to their own religion the Kashmiri Pandits were second to none in this world. But this also taught them to respect other religions in an equal manner which, in its turn, gained them the devotion and friendship of an overwhelming majority of their own countrymen and others. This paved the way for their rise to great heights in all branches of life. And this secured them an abiding place in the history.

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25

SIKH RULE AND THE KASHMIRI PANDITS

THE SIKHS found the affairs of the country in a terrible mess, but they even themselves could not contribute any constructive effort to ameliorate the lot of the people. The chief aim of the governors who were deputed from Lahore was to amass as much wealth as possible, and with this money they brought their immunity from the wrath of the Sikh ruler, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who manifested his concern on more than one occasion over the sufferings of the Kashmiri people. After the conquest of the country by the Sikhs, Misr Diwan Chand remained in charge of the country's administration for a few months. But the things went from bad to worse. Diwan Chand had all the qualifications of a great general but he lacked those qualities which could make a successful administrator. Misr Diwan Chand was summoned back. He reached Lahore and presented a sum of rupees twenty-five lacs to the Maharaja, and thus secured his immunity. He was succeeded by Diwan Moti Ram, a man of genial temperament and peace-loving disposition. Pandit Birbar Dhar was put in charge of the revenue administration. Pandit Birbar Dhar conducted himself with great ability and tact with the result that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was highly pleased with him and on the occasion of Dassehra festivities sent him a costly present of a *chauga-kalgi* - a pearl necklace and a gold bracelet, etc.[1] It was during Diwan Moti Ram's regime that

1. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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an attempt was made by some Sikh generals to destroy the mosque of Shah Hamdan, but as already mentioned it was at the intercession of Pandit Birbar Dhar that the intention was given up.[2] Whatever the fate which later on betook Pandit Birbar Dhar, this incident is enough to show the catholicity and the prudence of the Pandit. Diwan Moti Ram too, in spite of his virtues, could not effect an improvement in his administration. The result was that after a brief period of a year he was replaced in 1820 A.D. by Hari Singh Nalwa, the famous Sikh general. Pandit Birbar Dhar remained in charge of the revenue administration. Not long after, Maharaja Ranjit Singh expressed his desire to meet the prominent notables of Kashmir. In pursuance thereof, Pandit Birbar Dhar, Pandit Birbar Razdan, Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar, Mirza Pandit and Khwaja Munnawar Shah and many others including Pandit Nidhan Kaul (the author's great grandfather) left for Lahore. On reaching Daulatnagar, the party was stricken by cholera and Mirza Pandit and some others fell victims to it and died. Pandit Birbar Dhar and his surviving companions proceeded towards Lahore and gained an audience with the Sikh ruler. The Maharaja was highly pleased with the regularity of the accounts which were presented to him by Pandit Birbar Dhar. An elephant, a pair of golden bracelets and a *khillat* was presented to him. Laden with these gifts and honours Pandit Birbar Dhar and his party came back to Kashmir.[3] He reached Kralpura a suburb of Srinagar where Ganesha Pandit Dhar, son of Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar and a near collateral of Pandit Birbar Dhar was present for his reception. But Pandit Birbar Dhar received him with indifference, and passed an order after some time for the resumption of the villages which were

2. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 758.
3. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, pp. 759-60.

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granted to Ganesha Pandit Dhar on *mustajiri* basis. Ganesha Pandit Dhar, a chip of the same block, could not bear this insult. He went to the *subedar* Hari Singh Nalwa, and related to him the whole episode. Hari Singh Nalwa had expected that Pandit Birbar Dhar would pay him a visit before proceeding to his own house which was at the farthest end. But Pandit Birbar Dhar, though passed by the house of the *subedar*, did not enter for the in-auspiciousness of the hour. Hari Singh's suspicions, roused by Ganesha Pandit Dhar, were confirmed and the result was that their relations became strained. Pandit Birbar Dhar was dismissed, and a charge was brought against him that he had entered into a conspiracy with the Muslim hill chieftains for the overthrow of the Sikh rule.[4] Pandit Birbar Dhar was summoned to Lahore. Ganesha Pandit Dhar was appointed in his stead and his brother Pandit Ram Joo Dhar was appointed as the administrator of Kamraj. The charge of conspiracy was proved false to the entire satisfaction of the Sikh ruler, yet Pandit Birbar Dhar could not regain his lost glory and prestige. During these very days, reports reached to the Sikh ruler that Hari Singh Nalwa, on account of the repressive measures which he had adopted against the people, had lost their confidence. He was replaced by Diwan Moti Ram who was appointed as *subedar* a second time. With the deputation of Diwan Moti Ram, Pandit Birbar Dhar also secured permission to return to Kashmir. But not long after his relations with Diwan Moti Ram also became embittered. Diwan Moti Ram sent him to prison and confiscated all his movable property on the plea that he had done embezzlements of the *sarkari* moneys. Not long after Pandit Birbar Dhar died in custody — a strange irony of fate that the person who made it possible for the Sikh ruler to

4. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.

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occupy the country, and who greatly contributed to the strengthening of the administration, should have died as a prisoner![5]

Diwan Moti Ram did not remain long in Kashmir on account of the untimely death of his son which unhinged his mind so much that he proposed renouncing the world. His successor, Chuni Lal, committed suicide when he was summoned to Lahore to explain his inability to collect the revenues. Chuni Lal's successor, Diwan Kripa Ram, was a man of luxurious habits who was always out on trips to places noted for their natural scenery. The regime of Diwan Kripa Ram was not at all satisfactory. Both man and nature robbed the country of its peace. To crown the misfortunes which the people had to undergo as a result of severe eathquakes and cholera, Raja Zabardast Khan of Muzaffarabad backed by almost all the hill chieftains raised the standard of revolt against the Sikh rule, and greatly harassed the Sikh troops. Ganesha Pandit Dhar was specially deputed to deal with the newly risen menace. Without firing a single shot, the Pandit managed the whole affair to the entire satisfaction of the Sikh ruler.[6] By his consummate diplomacy he created a division in the enemy's ranks. The hill chieftains deserted Raja Zabardast Khan, who, left alone, had no alternative but to throw himself at the mercy of the Pandit, who took him along to the *subedar*.[7] The *subedar* having received from Raja Zabardast Khan costly presents for the Sikh ruler allowed him to go after leaving a hostage behind. This was a signal service which Ganesha Pandit Dhar rendered to the Sikh ruler. He now rose very high in the estimation of the Maharaja Ranjit

5. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
6. Fauq, History of Kashmir.
7. Fauq, History of Kashmir.

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Singh who, as will be seen, employed him on many an enterprise which involved a great deal of trust on behalf of the Maharaja and tact and ability on the part of the Pandit. Bhiman Singh Ardali became the *subedar* in 1831 A.D. He also appointed Ganesha Pandit Dhar as his chief minister.

Bhiman Singh did not remain in Kashmir for more than a year, but even this one year witnessed no better days. In particular there broke out a terrible Shia-Sunni riot, which entailed heavy miseries on the Shias. Ganesha Pandit Dhar dealt with the situation with consummate skill and soon succeeded in restoring the cordial relations between the two communities. The majority of the shawl factory owners was that of the Shias. Their ruin would have been the precursor of a greater ruin to the Sunnis, who were generally factory workers. Relief and rehabilitation of the Shias was necessary, and this was done by Ganesha Pandit Dhar without any loss of time.[8]

Bhiman Singh was followed by Shahzada Sher Singh, who was appointed as the *subedar* of Kashmir in 1832 A.D. He was accompanied by Basakha Singh as his assistant. But soon after some events took place which embittered Basakha Singh's relations with the prince. In the meantime Pandit Suraj Bhan, who was a *kardar*, apprised the *durbar* of a revolt on the Ladakh side which was backed by petty Rajas of the locality. Ganesha Pandit Dhar was deputed to deal with it. He raised troops from the hill tribes and made for Iskardu at the head of an imposing force. He inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Raja of Iskardu.[9] The Iskardu Raja became a tributory to the Sikh ruler, and Ganesha Pandit was granted

8. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*.
9. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*; see also Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 765.

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extensive *jagirs* in lieu of his victory. Ganesha Pandit was now at the height of his glory. Sher Singh sought his help for ridding himself of the insolent Basakha Singh. The Pandit, who himself did not favour the presence of an intruder, went to Lahore and secured the dismissal of Basakha Singh,[10] who having fallen into disgrace secured his former position only after the payment of a huge sum.

By this time, the Pandits in Kashmir had come to the top in large numbers. This was inherent in the situation. The Sikh rule itself was an imposition from above. The Sikhs did not trust the Muslims, nor did the Kashmiri Muslims ever reconcile themselves to being subjects of the Sikh ruler. The petty Muslim hill chiefs were always on the war path, and thought they could not withstand for long the great might of the Sikh ruler, yet the harrassment they caused was by no means insignificant. The policy of the Sikhs in Kashmir was therefore to keep the Kashmiri Muslims fully and completely subdued so as to eliminate any chance of their rising. Some of the principal mosques which afforded a meeting ground for the people were either confiscated or closed for prayers. Even *azan* - call to prayers - was stopped. This reminds one of the destruction of temples for similar reasons at the hands of Sikandar and Ali Shah, though there is no charge against the Sikhs of having destroyed a mosque, except as already mentioned more than once that they had designs on Shah Hamdan mosque which they gave up at the intercession of Pandit Birbar Dhar. The cultivators were heavily taxed. They were left with no incentive for tilling the soil. Mismanagement that was rampant created famine conditions. And, as a matter

10. Fauq, *History of Kashmir*; see also Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 765

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of fact, people died in hundreds and a devastating famine soon followed. Thousands left the valley and settled in the Punjab. It is estimated that during Sher Singh's regime the population of the valley dwindled down from eight to two lacs. The administrators, who were mainly in charge of policies, were deputed from Lahore, but the local bureaucracy was mainly manned by the Pandits. These Pandits had powerful supporters at the Lahore court, where a number of Kashmiri Pandits held very prominent places of trust and honour. Maharaja Ranjit Singh tried on more than one occasion to set the matter right by punishing the delinquents, but, as he himself shared the belief that the stability of the rule in Kashmir depended upon the spirit of the people of Kashmir being in complete subjection, even he could achieve no tangible results. The Sikh policy it seems was not to allow the growth of a rich class in Kashmir. In this they made no distinction between the Pandit and the Muslim. Wherever a suspicion arose about the possession of wealth by some person, it was taken from him in the form of *nazaran*. During Sher Singh's regime, *nazaran* were recovered from the high class Pandits in the following manner:

Pandit Suraj Bhan	...Rs. 1,75,000
Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi	...Rs. 75,000
Pandit Himat Joo Fotedar	...Rs. 25,000
Pandit Kanwal Bhan	...Rs. 35,000
Shankar Pandit Kotru	...Rs. 15,000
Chandra Pandit	...Rs. 25,000
Other Pandits - more than	...Rs. 1,00,000

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Similarly *nazaran* were recovered from the Muslim shawl merchants.[11] The result was that most of such people - both Hindus and Muslims - shifted from Kashmir and settled in other parts of India and the Punjab, where they found themselves more secured and safe.[12] Jamadar Khushal Singh who was sent to assist Sher Singh proved a veritable engine of oppression for the people. The Maharaja soon recalled him, but even then the ruin of the country was complete. Pandit Chandra Bhan, a local Pandit, who was accused of having assisted the *jamadar* in his unlawful activities, was arrested along with some other Muslims and Pandits. All these people were released only when they had purged themselves of their guilt by offering huge sums of money. Though the Maharaja received huge sums of money from Kashmir during this period, yet he could not allow the affairs to deteriorate to an irremediable extent. He had himself planned to visit Kashmir, but changed his mind because of the famine that had broken out in the country. It was time now that a new policy was introduced. Sher Singh was recalled and Colonel Mian Singh, a man of a humane and just temperament, was appointed in his place. Mian Singh reached Kashmir on 12th *Chet*, 1891 *Bikrami* (1834 A.D.).

11. Sohan Lal, *Umadatul Tawarikh* (quoted by Fauq).
12. Sohan Lal, *Umadatul Tawarikh* (quoted by Fauq).

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PANDITS AND THE LATER SIKH RULE

COLONEL MIAN Singh turned a new leaf in the annals of Sikh Kashmir. On his arrival in Kashmir, he found the affairs in a mess. Famine had impoverished the country in a very large measure. The cattle had perished in thousands. There was nothing left for the cultivators to fall back upon. Mian Singh also appointed Ganesha Pandit Dhar as his chief minister. Both the Pandit and the Colonel devised plans for the rehabilitation of the uprooted people. Food grains were imported from the Punjab and sold in Kashmir at very cheap rates. Besides, cattle, cocks and eggs were imported and distributed amongst the people free of cost. Even crows and pigeons were brought in. Dues from the cultivators which had been outstanding against them since the Afghan times were written off. Ganesha Pandit Dhar made an assessment of the land, and then distributed it amongst the farmers, in an equitable manner. The result was that within two years the price of *shali* per *khirwar* came down from sixteen rupees to one rupee. Besides, the judicial administration was also reorganized and put under Pandit Raja Kak Dhar.[1]

Mian Singh next paid his attention towards ridding the country of the lawless elements which was mainly the result of uncertainty that prevailed during the past years. A number of people had organized themselves under the leadership of one Khaira, known as Galaban, who moved about the country-

1. Kachru, Birbar, *History of Kashmir*.

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side on their swift steeds, carried fire and death wherever they went, and plundered the people of even their scanty belongings. Mian Singh dealt a crushing blow to this group, captured a number of them, and hanged them in public at Zaina Kadal (bridge). With the elimination of this group the high-ways in the countryside became safe for travel, and trade and commerce began to flourish.

But the shawl trade, which was the main source of the country's wealth, was at a standstill, as most of the shawl weavers had during the recent famine migrated to such places as Amritsar, Ludhiana and Basohli in Jammu. In the Jammu province, the weavers were very much encouraged by Maharaja Gulab Singh, who had occupied Kishtwar which opened a shorter though a difficult route to Ladakh wherefrom the wool for shawls came. With the shawl weavers well settled in the Jammu province, the Maharaja's attempt was to divert raw wool direct to Jammu through his newly acquired district of Kishtwar. In this, he succeeded to a considerable extent. The result was that the shawl industry of Kashmir was considerably damaged. Only a few years earlier, there were about twenty two thousand looms working which came down to not more than twenty two hundred.[2] The result was unemployment and the consequent poverty. Colonel Mian Singh tried to apprise Maharaja Ranjit Singh of this state of affairs, but due to the presence of Raja Dhyan Singh, the brother of Raja Gulab Singh, who was the chief minister at Lahore, the information was kept back from the Maharaja. At last the Colonel, in sheer exasperation, sent a trusted servant with a letter and with this direction that he should deliver the letter directly in the hands of the Maharaja. This was done.

2. Kachru, Birbar, *History of Kashmir*.

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The Maharaja expressed his great displeasure against Gulab Singh, with the result that some raw wool again began to pour into Kashmir. But Gulab Singh did not remain quiet. Soon after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death he led an expedition to Ladakh and occupied that district. With this conquest he became the master of the wool, and the industry developed in Jammu, though on account of climate and other conditions the results were not as satisfactory as in Kashmir. But, for the time being, the industry was revived in Kashmir and the unemployment abated considerably. During this period many European travellers, English, French, and German came to Kashmir. They took shawls with them as gifts to their friends at home, and by this a fresh impetus was given to the shawl trade in the European market. This gave rise again to a rich commercial class, which lived in great pomp and glory and possessed enormous wealth. All these achievements, which were by no means smaller or insignificant, were the result of the humane and just administrative policy introduced by Mian Singh and executed by Ganesha Pandit Dhar.

The news about the achievements of Ganesha Pandit Dhar did, in course of time, reach the Sikh ruler. He expressed a desire to meet the Pandit. Ganesha Pandit Dhar, accompanied by some other Pandits such as Pandit Himat Joo Fotedar, the head of the Accounts Department, reached Lahore. Ganesha Pandit was very well received by the Maharaja. Accounts were presented to the Maharaja who was so much satisfied with their accuracy that he compelled Ganesha Pandit Dhar, much against his will, to take the reponsibility for the revenue administration of the country.[3] The Pandit was made to enter into a situation to make yearly payment of a certain amount

3. Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir*.

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into the State treasury out of the realizations made by him. After having stayed at Lahore, the Pandit returned to Kashmir not without receiving costly gifts, a *khillat* and a *sanad* from the Sikh ruler. The Pandit discharged the new duties with great skill and honesty. He appointed *kardars* with the duties of looking after cultivation of the land and realization of land revenue. With agriculture coming to normal, the land revenue also began to increase. Ganesha Pandit Dhar now earmarked a sum of rupees three lacs out of the revenues collected by him for payment to some Hindus and Muslims as *dharmarth* and *mustamaris*. This payment was to be made annually. By this he created a strong party. It is no wonder that we find the historian Hassan referring him as *panditi nek akhtar*.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh died in 1839 A.D. After his death pandemonium reigned supreme in the Punjab. Army now freed from the iron grip of the late Maharaja became all powerful. Rival factions sought the help of the army for their self advance, and made lavish promises to it. The Sikh army in Kashmir also showed signs of restiveness which, in course of time, broke into open rebellion. Both Ganesha Pandit Dhar and Colonel Mian Singh tried to stem the tide of growing unrest but could not succeed. The result was that Colonel Mian Singh was murdered by the insurgent soldiery, though the Pandit succeeded in saving the Colonel's son. But Ganesha Pandit Dhar himself died within a fortnight. The result was that for some time the country fell into complete grip of lawlessness and misrule. Ganesha Pandit Dhar left behind him a son, Pandit Mahananda Joo Dhar. He was confirmed in his father's *jagirs* and, besides, adequate arrangements were

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ordered to be made from the Lahore *durbar* for his education. Mirza Imam Vardi a famous scholar of Lahore was appointed his teacher.[4]

After the murder of Colonel Mian Singh, a change was introduced in the policy of appointing governors to Kashmir. Hitherto no Muslim was appointed governor of Kashmir. But the lawlessness at Lahore had greatly weakened the military might of the Sikhs. In Kashmir, the Sikh army made itself very unpopular by its unruly conduct. What was needed was to somehow secure the goodwill of the Muslims of Kashmir which might secure the stability of Sikh rule in Kashmir. Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din a trusted servant of the Sikh State was appointed as the governor of Kashmir in 1841 A.D. He appointed Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi as his chief minister.[5] The Jama Masjid, which had been kept closed for public prayers from the time of Diwan Moti Ram, was now thrown open for prayers. This act of his went a long way in winning the goodwill of the Muslims. Having created a sound base for his regime, the Sheikh dealt a crushing blow to the frontier Muslim hill chieftains who, having taken advantage of the prevailing turmoil, had become semi-independent. Pandit Raja Kak Dhar was appointed in charge of Kamraj, the northern province of Kashmir, which, on account of the contiguity of the frontier tribal area, required the vigilance of the skilful administrator. By such means, the Sheikh gave some life to the administration left dead on account of the disorder in Lahore. Both the Sheikh and his Pandit minister laid two gardens which to this day commemorate their names. The garden known as Sheikh Bagh was laid by Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din and the other, known as Munshi Bagh, by his

4. Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir*.
5. Pir Hassan Shah, Vol. II, p. 779.

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minister, Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi. The cluster of Chinars planted in Munshi Bagh in a well planned manner bespeaks the aesthetic sense of the Pandit even today.

Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din died in Kashmir and was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, who was then present in Kashmir. The chief minister, will be remembered for long for his tactfulness with which he tackled the problems relating to shawl weavers who were reduced to the status of mere slaves with small advances made to them by their employers. They could not leave an employer and work elsewhere, and their wages were very scanty and meagre. Sheikh Imam-ud-Din freed them from the virtual slavery of their masters, and also ordered an increment in their wages. Besides, it was ordered that paddy be supplied to the weavers from the State granaries at a price which was less by two *annas* in a rupee. The shawl manufacturers had now to give to the weavers a bonus of three per cent from their profits. But in spite of his good intentions, he was not destined to remain long in Kashmir. After a short stay of six months, the country was handed over to Gulab Singh as a result of the treaty between the Sikhs and the British Government.

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KASHMIRI PANDITS AT MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH'S *DURBAR*

IN THE preceding chapters we have seen how the Kashmiri Pandits began an orderly migration from Kashmir ever since the Moghuls occupied the country. Some left willingly in search of 'meadows and pastures new', and some were forced to leave by the exigencies of times. They spread over the whole of Indian sub-continent. With the break-down of the Moghul Empire, a number of kingships came into existence, and the Pandits entered into services there. They went as far as Bengal. Pandit Kedar Nath, an ancestor of Hon'ble Pandit Ajudhya Prasad Kunzru, became the *diwan* of Mir Jaffar Kanth. During these very days Pandit Sada Sukh (grandfather of Hon'ble Bishambar Nath) was in-charge of revenue administration in the Hyderabad State. So also in many other States. In the pandemonium which followed the breakdown of the Moghul rule in Kashmir, Pandit Krishan Das, an unknown Kashmiri Pandit, left his native place and reached Delhi. By dint of his attainments in the Persian language, he succeeded in carving a place for himself at the Moghul court. There he became the nucleus of a small group of the Pandits, and wherever they went they went in a body. He had a son named Pandit Ganga Ram, who rose very high at the Sikh *durbar*. With the establishment of the Sikh rule in the Punjab, the necessity of regulating the finances of the State was keenly felt by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Having been apprised of the attainments of Pandit Ganga Ram in this field, the Sikh ruler invited him to Lahore. Till then there were

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very few Kashmiri Pandits residing at Lahore. Pandit Ganga Ram accepted the offer, and in the year 1813 A.D. he moved to Lahore with a number of Pandits, the chief amongst them being Raja Pandit Dina Nath, Pandit Daya Ram, Pandit Hari Ram, Pandit Gopi Nath, Pandit Ram Krishan, Pandit Ganga Bishen Ghamkhwar and Pandit Lachman Prasad. These and many others settled at Lahore, and were prominently placed at the Sikh court. Pandit Ganga Ram, having risen very high in the estimation of the Sikh ruler, was appointed the finance minister. After the death of Pandit Ganga Ram, the mantle fell upon the shoulders of his friend and relative, Raja Pandit Dina Nath, who had accompanied him to Lahore from Delhi, where one of his forefathers Pandit Raghu Nath Kaul had settled in the reign of Emperor Muhammad Shah. His father, Pandit Bhaktmal, also was employed at the Sikh court. But Raja Pandit Dina Nath rose to a higher place of eminence. He was put in-charge of the privy seal by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the Maharaja, general disorder prevailed. The army became restive and openly rebellious. Many prominent *sardars* were killed and many princes of the royal blood were made to taste the bitter cup of an ignominious death. But, in all this disastrous fire of misrule, if there was one man who came out unscathed, it was only Raja Pandit Dina Nath. Not only that, his power and influence increased day by day. It is recorded about him that when the political firmament appeared peaceful and satisfactory, his discerning eye perceived the onward march of silent and invisible clouds, which rained fire and disaster after some time. He made his plans to tide over the difficulty long before the difficulty had made its appearance.[1] European historians describe him as Talleyrand of the Punjab, but in spite of the sting in the insinuation

1. Griffin, Sir Lepel H., *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol. I, p. 255.

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contained in the remark, he was highly spoken of by the Europeans with whom he came into contact. The amount of recognition which they gave to his great power and influence can be gathered from the fact that he was one of the signatories to the treaty which was concluded between the Sikhs and the British after the first Sikh war. Later on, a council was constituted in December, 1846 for the governance of the Punjab, and Raja Pandit Dina Nath was made its president, with the active support of the British.[2]

With Raja Pandit Dina Nath in the saddle, hundreds of Kashmiri Pandits migrated to the Punjab from Kashmir. He became the rallying factor of all these fresh immigrants, and invariably helped them to successful careers. In course of time, Pandit colonies sprang up both at Lahore and Amritsar. In view of the fact that Raja Pandit Dina Nath and other Kashmiri Pandit notables had succeeded in winning the confidence of the British conquerers, the latter meted out to them great encouragement, and made them recipients of many posts of trust and honour, which were till then kept closed to Indians.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh modelled his army on the European plan. There were many French generals serving in his army, chief amongst whom were General Ventura and General Allard. They received command of the Maharaja's *fauj-i-khas* which was considered the first in rank in the Sikh army. He was assisted by a Kashmiri Pandit, the son of Pandit Ganga Ram, named Adjutant General Diwan Pandit Ajudhya Prashad.[3] Pandit Ajudhya Prashad showed considerable skill in handling military matters. During General Ventura's absence while on leave, Pandit Ajudhya Prashad was placed

2. Fauq, *Mashahiri Kashmir*; Griffin, p. 258.
3. Fauq, *Mashahiri Kashmir*; see also Griffin, p. 273.

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in full command of the *fauj-i-khas*, and during this time he led successful military expeditions against the Raja of Mandi and other refractory hill chieftains. After his return from France, General Ventura paid a glowing tribute to the military genius of the Pandit, and remarked that he had found the troops in a better spirit than when he had left them in-charge of the Pandit. After General Ventura's final exit, Pandit Ajudhya Prashad was placed in independent command of these troops.[4]

There is no use in multiplying names of the Pandits who were prominent at the Sikh court. But even then there is one Pandit whose mention would not be out of place here i.e. Colonel Pandit Badri Nath. He migrated from Kashmir during the Afghan rule, and got enlisted as a sepoy in the Sikh army. He gradually rose to the rank of a colonel. He was second in command to General Hari Singh Nalwa, when the latter wrested Peshawar from the Barakzais.[5]

But the Sikh empire was a short-lived affair. New circumstances ended the Sikh rule in the Punjab for all time.

4. Griffin, pp. 273, 274.
5. Griffin, p. 274.

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KASHMIRI PANDITS UNDER DOGRA REGIME

WITH THE defeat of the Sikhs in their war against the British, Kashmir came into the possession of Maharaja Gulab Singh under circumstances which have been so often discussed that no detailed reference is required here except that the Sikhs having failed to pay a war indemnity of rupees seventy five lacs, the province of Kashmir was taken away from them and given over to Maharaja Gulab Singh in lieu of this sum. Maharaja Gulab Singh became the first Dogra ruler of the country in the year 1846 A.D. At that time there were many Kashmiri Pandits at the top who managed the affairs of the country with considerable ability. But with the advent of Maharaja Gulab Singh, a number of the Punjabi-notables amongst whom were the *diwans* of Eminabad,[1] who came into the country. In his chequered career during which Maharaja Gulab Singh met many disappointments and also the fulfilment of many ambitions including the possession of Kashmir, he was greatly assisted by a Khatri named Diwan Jwala Sahai belonging to Eminabad. It is said that it was this gentleman who arranged the money which the Maharaja had undertaken to pay to the British in lieu of Kashmir. It was natural that he and his own followers rose very high in the estimation of the Maharaja. Diwan Jwala Sahai became the

1. [Situated to the south-east of Gujranwala at a distance of eight miles on the Gujranwala and Amritsar road. Eminabad was one of the principal places of the district Gujranwala of Undivided Punjab.]

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first prime minister under the Dogra rule, and this office was to remain in his family in perpetuity. He was granted extensive fiefs, besides a certain portion of the State revenues. The *diwan* was astute enough in his line. He aimed at the creation of a Punjabi Hindu ruling class in Kashmir, on whose loyalty he or his successors could place implicit faith. The result was the in-coming of many Punjabis, who received great encouragement at the hands of the Eminabadi *diwans*. Extensive land grants were made in their favour, and they were placed on many places of trust and power. Besides, the commerce of the country also passed into their hands. The Kashmiri Muslims were not much in the picture politically, though in the economic field they were a force. Now came the turn of the Pandit. With the immigration of waves of the Punjabi settlers, the Pandit found himself gradually pushed into the background, though the process was slow. The Dogra Hindus, who were a brave people by themselves, were thrust solely into the army and were kept ousted almost entirely from the civil administration. More of it will be discussed later on.

When Maharaja Gulab Singh reached Kashmir, Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi a Kashmiri Pandit, was the prime minister. He had to make room for the Emanabadi *diwan* who, as already stated, put his own men on the key positions. With Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi thrown out, other Pandits also were ousted from the office. But the village administration remained mostly in the hands of the Pandits. They maintained the village records, and acted as village school masters.

Maharaja Gulab Singh had learnt a great deal in the school of adversity. In settling the affairs of Kashmir, he fully drew upon his immense experience. He resumed the *jagirs* which

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were granted to favoured people by previous rulers. He adopted further measures, which raised the revenue collection and also freed the country from the lawless elements. The resumption of *jagirs* created a great deal of resentment amongst the *jagirdars*. Representations were made to the British Government. A commission under an Englishman was sent to Kashmir to inquire into the allegations. Pandit Raja Kak Dhar, who commanded a great deal of local influence and to whom reference has been made earlier, helped the Maharaja to tide over the difficulty and even succeeded in taking a favourable verdict from the commissioners. Pandit Raja Kak Dhar was appointed the governor of Kamraj, but after a short time he was placed in charge of the Shawl Department. He raised the income of this department from four lacs to twelve lacs of rupees. The shawl weavers whose wages were in consequence reduced went on strike. This is perhaps the first attempt of the working class in India to stage a strike. But the workers lacked leadership and were a disorganized lot. Their agitations were easily crushed, though at one time a demonstration staged by them was dispersed with the aid of the military, when a number of people fleeing from the military fell into a stream while crossing a bridge which gave way under them. Pandit Raja Kak Dhar was thereafter placed in-charge of the whole province for some time, and a distant cousin of his, Pandit Mahananda Joo Dhar, was appointed first the governor of Kamraj and then as officer-in-charge of the Accounts Department. Pandit Mahananda Joo Dhar was later appointed the governor of Jammu. But, on the whole, Kashmiri Pandits were imperceptibly receding to the background. The governors, who had considerable powers then, were deputed from Jammu, and they brought their own men with them and placed them at key positions. Trade and commerce, both export and import, was snatched

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from the Kashmiris and it became a sole monopoly of the Punjabi Khatris, who now came back in large numbers and settled in Kashmir.

Maharaja Gulab Singh died in 1857 A.D. and was succeeded by his son, Maharaja Ranbir Singh. Maharaja Gulab Singh's successor proved himself a sagacious ruler who not only consolidated the State but also introduced many reforms in the State. During this period, another section of the Kashmiri Pandits now made their appearance on the scene. These were the Kashmiri Pandits who had migrated to India during previous regimes now began coming back to Kashmir. But during the absence from their country which extended over a period of more than a century, they had changed beyond recognition. Their dress, and their language was non-Kashmiri, though they had clung to their customs and traditions with a pertinacious tenacity. Diwan Badri Nath who belonged to the family of Raja Pandit Dina Nath, was the first to appear on the scene. He was appointed the governor of Kashmir. With him came a number of the Kashmiri Pandits. But socially they maintained a certain amount of aloofness from the local Kashmiri Pandits, though inter-marriage was practised to some extent and common customs were followed.

We have seen in the preceding chapters that the shawl trade was quite in a flourishing condition during the previous regimes. But during the Dogra regime, due to the causes over which nobody had control, the industry was well-nigh ruined. The shawl was much prized in Europe. Even Queen Victoria had made a rule to present a shawl as wedding gift to any princess of royal blood, and thus its use came into vogue in England. But its chief market was France and the French traders used to depute their agents to Kashmir directly from

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France. The defeat of France in 1870 A.D. in the Franco-Russian war spelt ruin to the industry and almost all the shawl magnates were ruined. The result was that there was complete unemployment in the towns and great resentment in men's minds. The shawl industrialists were mostly Shias and the weavers Sunnis. Many people who could not understand the force of the world events held the Shias responsible for closing down the factories and the result was a Shia-Sunni riot, in which the Shias suffered most, and so also the Sunni notables who were suspected by the government of being at the back of the Sunni rising against the Shias. This also worked against the revival of the industry. There was yet some hope of its revival but then there broke out a terrible famine which continued for three consecutive years (1876 to 1878 A.D.). A good many shawl weavers left the country and settled in Lahore, Amritsar and Ludhiana.

The deputation of the French agents to Kashmir brought the Kashmiri Pandits face to face with European culture and literature. Hitherto, their literary pursuits were limited to a knowledge of Persian and Sanskrit but now, with fresh opportunities at their disposal, they began to study French and other European languages. Pandit Rama Joo Dhar, who was then the *diwan-i-mal*, learned some French, Latin and English, but being an influential member of the community who did not like the other members of the community sharing this fresh knowledge with him discouraged and dissuaded people from acquiring a knowledge of these languages. But in spite of his discouragement, which meant pushing the hands of the clock backwards, did not yield any appreciable results.

Reference has been already made to the famine of 1876 A.D. It was a terrible famine which shook the whole structure of the society to its very basis. Thousands of people fled

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from the country and settled in various parts of India. The population was reduced to one-half. Maharaja Ranbir Singh took various measures to alleviate the sufferings of the people. But the sufferings were acute and so also the resentment in men's minds was great. The Pandits suffered along with rest of the people, though their sufferings were not so severe as that of the other people. But they had other grievances. Politically, they were being cast to the background. Sensitive amongst them could not tolerate all this. But far from getting any redress they became victims of intrigue and suspicion. As ill-luck would have it, a number of famine-stricken people were being carried across the Wuller lake to some adjoining villages. These boats capsized in the middle of the lake and many people were drowned. As generally happens in such cases, the rumour spread that the government not being able to sustain the burden of feeding so many hungry mouths drowned them in the lake. Somebody laid a complaint with the Government of India about this drowning and laid the blame for this tragedy upon the Kashmir *durbar*. A high officer was deputed for preliminary inquiry in the matter. Suspicion turned upon an influential Kashmiri Pandit named Pandit Hara Gopal Kaul, who had shortly before come back to Kashmir after having passed his early life in the Punjab, where his services were most often made use of for political assignments by the British authorities. Pandit Hara Gopal Kaul came back with fresh ideas and assumed the leadership of the rising middle class in his community. The Maharaja was himself of the belief that the complaint was lodged by Pandit Hara Gopal Kaul and was the outcome of the British intrigue. The Maharaja had his own reasons to suppose so. He had withstood all the overtures of the British Indian Government for affording them a foothold in the country. Only a limited number of European visitors were allowed in the country,

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and they could not remain in the valley for more than a specified period of time. The Christian missionaries too were positively discouraged if not actually banned. Trade facilities also were denied to the Europeans. This naturally made the Maharaja suspect that the British had a hand in the complaint which he believed as already noted, was lodged by Pandit Hara Gopal Kaul. After a preliminary inquiry, the officer deputed by the Government of India, made a report about the baselessness of the complaint and left the matter to be decided by the Maharaja. Pandit Hara Gopal Kaul behaved boldly in the whole episode. He inquired of the British officer in the open *durbar* as to who was his prosecutor and who was his judge, and being informed that it was the *sarkar*, he said that it was a queer justice that one and the same person should act both as the judge and the prosecutor. The Maharaja it is said, lost his temper and would have done physical violence to the Pandit, but he was prevented from doing so by his courtiers. But that did not end the matter. Pandit Hara Gopal Kaul and his brother, Pandit Saligram Kaul, were interned in the Bahu fort in the Jammu province. But the brothers proved of a sterner stuff, and it was not long before that both the brothers fled from the fort and reached the adjoining British territory of Sialkot. There, a newspaper was started by them which took a very strong line of criticism against the Kashmir *durbar*. But the brothers were, only after a few years, pursuaded by the *durbar* to come back, which they did.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was indeed a very wise ruler. The development schemes which he inaugurated are even now yielding fruit. He had a full-fledged Development Ministry under whose guidance many past industries were either revived or new industries started. He started the silk factory, and planted mulberry trees all over the valley, as the leaves of these are very essential to rear the silk worms. The shawl

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industry was revived, and a brewery which produced good wines was started. This brewery was later on closed under pressure of the British Government. The army was about forty-five thousand strong under the generalship of the Dogra and Gurkha officers. This army proved its mettle in Gilgit and Ladakh campaigns. The terms of command were all in Sanskrit. A Research Department was also started. In this all, the Maharaja was very ably assisted by his able prime minister, Diwan Kripa Ram, who was son of Diwan Jwala Sahai. Diwan Kripa Ram had produced a report on Kashmir valley in 1870 A.D. reading of which can even now be of great benefit. The report contains a well-ordered treatment of all the subjects which concern the valley. In producing this report he was assisted by a number of Kashmiri Pandits.

After the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1885 A.D. he was succeeded by his son Maharaja Pratap Singh. With his accession to the throne, the British Indian Government changed its former policy of non-interference and deputed, for the first time in the history of the State, a Resident to Kashmir. Some veiled charges like that of treason having been brought against the Maharaja, he was virtually deposed by the Government of India, and in his stead a council was constituted to carry on the government of the country. Raja Pandit Suraj Kaul, a Kashmiri Pandit of Lahore, was appointed the revenue member of the council. The deposition of the Maharaja created a furore in the length and breadth of India. The press in India, notably the 'Amrita Bazar Patrika' and 'Akhbar-i-Am' of Lahore (an influential vernacular paper of Lahore owned and edited by Pandit Gopi Nath Kaul, a Kashmiri Pandit) took up the Maharaja's cause. Pandit Veda Lal Dhar, who later on became his private secretary bore him constant company during this period of gloom, and interceded on his behalf with the top British officers and the public

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including the members of the Parliament. The Maharaja's powers were restored partially, but the council continued functioning though now under his presidentship. Raja Pandit Suraj Kaul took up the work of land settlement. Sir Walter Lawrence was appointed the settlement officer, and under him worked a number of Kashmiri Pandits. These Pandits were deputed to such far-flung places as Gilgit, Chilas, Gupis, Iskardu, and Ladakh for the purpose of effecting land settlement and assessment work. The means of communication were almost non-existent and the mountain paths were most unsafe. They worked on mere pittance, braved great dangers and suffered untold troubles. All these places bore contiguity to frontier districts, and besides being quite unsettled, lawlessness was rampant everywhere, and the marauding bands from across the border were constant visitors. Some of these Pandits were abducted by the tribals across the border and many more died on account of the rigours of an unsuitable climate. But finally a land settlement was effected. In Muzaffarabad district, Pandit Mahananda Joo Dhar prepared an assessment report which is even now known as *khewat-i-mahananda joo*, and has been judicially recognized as a reliable document. It was by such sacrifices and sufferings that the Pandits contributed to the consolidation and settlement of the State.

During Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign, certain reforms were introduced in the administration. Municipalities were constituted, and a college was established at Jammu. Pandit Daya Krishan Kaul - a Kashmiri Pandit from Lahore - who was Maharaja's private secretary, took a keen interest in starting a college at Srinagar with private effort. Till then very few Kashmiri Pandits had received modern education, but with the introduction of English in the central offices they found themselves unfit for any positions in the central

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administration. With the formation of the council, which was wholly manned by people from the neighbouring province of the Punjab, waves of office-hunters from outside moved towards Kashmir. They got employment in almost every central office. All the important positions came to be occupied by them, and even in subordinate offices they found place in large numbers. These outsiders opposed giving higher education to the people of the State. One of the members of the council made a proposal that no college should even be opened in Kashmir, as it would be unwise to impart higher education to the people of a frontier province. But as it has already been seen, one of the members of the council, Raja Pandit Suraj Kaul was a Kashmiri. His father moved down to Lahore in the closing years of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign. He had his relations in Kashmir and with his influence some local Kashmiri Pandits received encouragement. A good number of expatriate Kashmiri Pandits were also encouraged to come back. His son, Pandit Daya Krishan Kaul, opened correspondence with Annie Besant and pursuaded her to open a college at Srinagar. Soon after a college known as Sri Pratap Hindu College was opened at Srinagar. The local Kashmiri Pandit boys joined the college in large numbers.

During these years, the Muslims were not much in the picture. The policy of the Government of India was to keep the Muslim peasantry more or less contended but under control. As already stated, a regular land settlement was effected. Their holdings were guaranteed to them. But little encouragement was given to them in the field of education for the fear that they might become conscious of their political rights. Due to the Franco-German war of 1870, the Muslim commercial class was ruined beyond hope. The result was that the leadership of the Muslims went into the hands of the obscurantists and reactionary priests who also discouraged

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their taking to Western education. Things went on in this manner when a local *maulvi* named Maulana Rasool Shah, who was imbued with some progressive ideas, realized that without modern education the Muslims would always remain backward. He founded an association and under its auspicies a Muslim Secondary School was started. In this, he was greatly helped by some outside Muslims who were in State service. The teachers appointed at the beginning were mostly Pandits. In the first council, which was constituted under the British guidance after Maharaja Pratap Singh's virtual deposition, there was no Muslim member in the council. But when some powers were restored to the Maharaja, the council was re-organized and a Muslim member was also included in it. And since then the Muslims, though mostly outsiders, also were appointed to the government posts. These Muslim officials encouraged Maulana Rasool Shah such in his efforts, but the local Muslims, under the leadership of fanatical priests, raised a tempest and even attempts were made on his life. Inspite of this the school soon became a High School, and Muslims began attending this school in large numbers, but the Pandit boys had gone much ahead of them.

The Pandits fully availed of the fresh opportunity afforded to them by the opening of a college. And the first batch of the graduates came out in 1911 A.D. The government meted out a positive discouragement to them. A struggle was the result, which took the shape of Kashmiri Pandits versus the outsiders. The people of the Jammu province also were meted out the same fate. True, that they found an opening for themselves in the army, but the outside element in the administration, which was both powerful and predominent stood in their way of getting a foothold in the civil administration. At Jammu the struggle sprouted forth into the Dogra versus Punjabi controversy. The Punjabis were by far

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in a favourable position. Throughout Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign, the prime ministers and other ministers including heads of departments came generally from their neighbouring province of the Punjab. In the struggle which ensued, the outsiders had the upper hand.

In Kashmir, the British officers encouraged the Pandits and even sided with them in their struggle against the outsiders. The Pandits were enlisted in very large numbers in all the departments, headed by the British officers. The outsiders were generally Arya Samajis with whom was connected the name of Lala Lajpat Rai. They had their connection with their home province and whenever they returned from there after a brief sojourn, they came laden with fresh ideas. This was an anathema to the British and hence their partiality for the Kashmiri Pandit. A deputation of the Jammu people waited upon the Maharaja and exhorted him in strong terms to safeguard the rights of the State Subjects. The Residency also backed this demand of the people. The result was that a definition of the State Subject was formulated in 1912 A.D. and an order was promulgated that only the subjects of the State should be recruited to the State services. But the definition was so loosely worded that it afforded little relief to the people, and the resentment amongst the educated classes went on increasing day by day. In the early twenties, the resentment took the form of an agitation. The present writer along with Pandit Shankar Lal Kaul, Pandit Jia Lal Kaul and Pandit Jia Lal Jalali - all of them fresh from the college - started an agitation through the outside press for securing the rights of the State Subjects. The present writer organized public meetings and held conferences both at Srinagar and at Jammu under the auspicies of the Dogra Sabha. A sort of vague nationalism was taking roots in the minds of the educated class and in face of the

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common outside menace the educated classes both of Jammu and Srinagar felt a sort of common kingship. The Dogras of Jammu held a big political conference and elected the present writer to preside over the conference. A batch of Pandit delegates attended the Jammu conference, and the educated lower middle class youth who were mostly Hindus of both the provinces founded a common platform for expressing their grievances. During the closing years of Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign, Maharaja Hari Singh came into prominence. He sided with the people, and under his guidance a committee was constituted which framed a definition of the State Subject that is still in force. This was the result of the agitation which the educated classes started and in which the Kashmiri Pandits took a leading part.

Maharaja Pratap Singh died in the year 1925 A.D., and he was succeeded by Maharaja Hari Singh. The youthful Maharaja made some good though in a way dramatic gestures. He delivered a speech soon after his ascending the *gaddi*, and declared that his religion was 'Justice'. He attended the Muslim prayers on the occasion of 'Id'. By such means he tried to add to his popularity which he had gained with the educated classes as a result of the part played by him in framing a State Subject's definition. But, as regards real power, he flatly refused to share it with anybody, least of all his subjects. He even dispensed with a prime minister and himself acted as such. But his choice of the high officers and of the ministers was not a satisfactory one. All these officers having no experience of handling any serious situation, had to cut a sorry figure when a crisis arose. These were the days when there was great revolution in the whole of India. Though there was no freedom of press or platform in the State, yet a stir was clearly visible. The movement went underground. The present writer and a number of educated Pandit youth

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along with a Kashmiri Pandit journalist, Pandit Gwasha Lal Kaul, wrote extensively to national papers and issued hand written and sometimes cyclostyled posters in which the short-comings of the ruling junta were discussed thread-bare. This went on for some time, till contacts were established with the workers in other Indian States. 'The Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal' representing the popular movements in the Punjab States was the result, of which the present writer became the general secretary. There were some Kashmiri Pandits at Lahore, the chief amongst whom was Pandit Kashyap Bandhu who established a Labour Board at Lahore to look after the interests and welfare of Kashmiri labourers - all Muslims - who used to migrate to the Punjab to work during the winter months. A big conference was organized at Lahore in which Pandit Kashyapa Bandhu, the present writer and a number of Kashmiri Pandits participated. In fact the organizers of this conference were all Kashmiri Pandits. The conference was presided over by Pandit Pyare Mohan Dattatreya, a Kashmiri Pandit from Delhi, who was then on the editorial staff of 'The Tribune', Lahore. This conference created a stir in the government circles and for the first time a sort of a Publicity Department was established to put the government case before the world and meet the criticism levelled at it. It was during these very days (1929 A.D.) that the municipal elections were held at Srinagar on a joint electoral basis without reservation of seats. The present writer was opposed by a Kashmiri Pandit candidate with a solid government backing. Yet he was returned with a thumping majority, the Muslim voters having voted en-block for him. The government now tried to woo the Congress leaders. Late Shri Jamuna Lal Bajaj and Shri Jairamdas Daulatram came to Kashmir in connection with the 'All-India Spinner's Association'. This Association, with which was connected Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, who later

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became the prime minister, received his first political training and nationalist inspiration from it and was doing a commendable work. The two Congress leaders were received well by the government officers, especially by Pandit R.K. Wattal (an expatriate Kashmiri Pandit) who was the finance minister and was believed to have progressive nationalist ideas. A favourable impression was created in the minds of the two leaders who spoke publicly in praise of the administration. But the present writer invited them and a number of leading Kashmiris to his place, and gave them a true picture of the conditions obtaining the country and requested them not to bestow praise on the administration in the Indian States. It had the desired effect.

The government changed its tactics. The ruler was advised by his minister, who was a British, not to ignore the growing opposition. By such means they hoped to rob the opposition of its sting. The present writer, though quite a youngster, while compared to the other members, was nominated a non-official member of a retrenchment commission that was set up then. It was the first time that a non-official was associated with the task of handling the State business. The commission finished its work, and the present writer received a letter from the ruler in which his work on the commission was greatly praised and highly spoken of. It was whispered to the present writer that a proposal was made for his appointment in the government department of the State. But soon after (in 1930 A.D.) Mahatma Gandhi was arrested. On that day, a huge procession headed by the present writer and some leading Pandits like Pandit Shiva Ji Khuda, Pandit Shambu Nath Ogra and others was carried out through the city of Srinagar, and at its termination a huge bonfire of foreign cloth was held at Maharajganj. Kashmiri Pandits in thousands participated in this procession, though the Muslims generally refrained from

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it. The procession created a deep wound in the hearts of the representatives of the British Government in Kashmir. Their friendliness towards the Kashmiri Pandits ended and they tried to find other supporters.

1930 A.D. is a record year in the annals of Kashmir. As already noted it was the year in which for the first time in the history of Kashmir a political procession was carried out in Srinagar. It was also the year when Shiekh Muhammad Abdullah returned after completing his education at Aligarh. As already stated, the Muslims, who were lagging behind in receiving formal education, did not participate in the political demonstrations which were mainly organized by the Pandits. Their leadership was vested either in some high Muslim families with a definite feudal outlook or the small and reactionary Muslim clergy. There was no educated Muslim middle class developed yet though some Muslim youth had received higher education. But they were only hunting for a job here or there, and were by themselves a disorganized lot. They had a grievance that the government insisted only on merit for government services, and did not take note of the fact that they belonged to a backward community and as such required encouragement. They interpreted all this as a trick to keep them from entering the government services. As a counterblast to all this they demanded jobs on population basis. The agriculturist classes too which included a high percentage of the Muslims were very resentful. The post-war crash of 1929-30 A.D. was having its effects upon Kashmir also. The prices of crops had gone down considerably. In order to improve their income, many Muslim peasants started going out to the neighbouring provinces of the Punjab for getting some work. They went away every year in thousands and scattered themselves all over the Punjab. Their living conditions there were deplorable. They lived in

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slums and many amongst them died of malaria every year. There was no arrangement made by the government to look after their interests, though a Labour Board, to which reference has been already made, was created with non-official effort. But that too achieved no great results. This created general discontent. It was at this stage that Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah appeared on the scene. Having seen the first civil disobedience at its full, his sensitive mind could not but be impressed with the general conditions overtaking the country. He was offered a small job of a teacher with very meagre emoluments which be accepted. But he devoted his time mainly in the organization of his people. Left to itself, the Kashmir movement would have taken a nationalist move from the very beginning. But the Kashmiri Muslim movement drew inspiration from politics as it was in vogue in the province of Jammu. The latter province was strong in the grip of the Punjab communalism, powerful waves of which swept all over the Jammu province. Overtures were made by the Jammu Muslim leaders to the Kashmir leaders, and a united Muslim movement with its ramifications all over the country was the result. The Pandit nationalists found themselves in the wilderness, and their Muslim colleagues, who in the changed circumstances were powerless to achieve any substantial results, retired from the field. The result was that a movement which was mainly political and economic in essence took the shape of a communal movement. Not only that, the Muslim communalists of the Punjab who were basking under the bureaucratic sunshine of the British regime now came forward and organized a Kashmir conference at Lahore which greatly influenced the decisions of the Kashmir movement. The Hindu communalists also came out with their own communal demands as an answer to the Muslim movements. The result was Hindu-Muslim tension all over the State. To meet the

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situation, the Maharaja appointed Pandit Hari Krishan Kaul, a retired commissioner of the Punjab, as prime minister. In Kashmir, the Pandit movement was led by Pandit Kashyap Bandhu and the present writer, and was greatly kept within nationalist bounds. Both of them, in spite of the differences, kept their contacts with Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, which robbed communalism in the country of much of its fury. The conditions soon settled down. After the situation was further eased the Maharaja asked the various communities to submit their demands. The present writer was elected the spokesman by the Kashmiri Pandits who in this capacity submitted a memorandum to the Maharaja regarding their demands. In the memorandum, the Pandits, unlike any other community in the State, stated unequivocally that:

> Consistently with our culture and the tradition of our community both here and outside the State, we cannot look on things through communal glasses. It was the proud boast of the great Pandit Moti Lal Nehru that his mind could not run in communal channels. This sums up, we believe, the position of the average Kashmiri Pandit on communal matters. Long before the Musalmans of Kashmir had become politically conscious, it was the Kashmiri Pandits who fought for modernism in the administration. It was they who first demanded a legislature, a free press and a free platform. They cannot today go back on their nationalism, and repudiate these and other essentials of good government. Recently they have not been so vocal for political reform, but the reason is that the Musalmans have presented their claims avowedly on communal grounds and for communal ends. Kashmiri Pandits are as anxious as any other community for the introduction of constitutional government, but they are equally anxious that the body politic should not be corrupted by the cancer of communalism...

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Soon after, the Muslims organised their 'All State Muslim Conference' and so did the Pandits. The first conference of the Muslims was presided over by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and the present writer presided over the Pandit conference. The Pandits from all over the country came to participate in the conference which made it an imposing affair. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah also attended this conference. When the present writer was delivering his address, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was so impressed with the nationalistic sentiments expressed therein, that he picked up a garland and jumped on the rostrum to garland the speaker. The seed of nationalism was again sown. But it took some more time to fructify the seed. The country remained in the grip of communal movement for about six years. But, in the meanwhile, an assembly was inaugurated, which in spite of the fact that it had very little power, did at least one good, that it provided a common meeting place for the representatives of different communities and regions. There in the assembly the members sometimes forged a joint front in which the present writer and Pandit G.R. Kabu, who also was a member, participated. This went a long way in easing the political situation. Meanwhile contacts between the Muslim and Pandit leaders grew thicker day by day, and joint public meetings began to be held which were addressed by both the Pandit and Muslim leaders. There was a stir in all the Indian States at that time. This stir was clearly visible in Kashmir too. A joint demand known then as 'National Demand' was framed. Through this a demand was made for some political reforms as a first step towards responsible government. The demand was treated slight by the then government. The result was an agitation which was carried on by both the Pandits and Muslims. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and all prominent leaders of the Muslim conference

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were arrested and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. About a thousand people were thus jailed, including a hundred Kashmiri Pandits viz. present writer, Pandit Kashyap Bandhu, Pandit Shyamlal Saraf, Dr. Peshin, Pandit Jankinath Sapru, Pandit Jankinath Zutshi, Pandit Premnath Bazaz and others. After their release, a special convention of the Muslim conference was held, under the chairmanship of Gulam Muhammad Sadiq and it was formally converted into National conference. Thus was 'National Conference' born. But here we stop. What followed is a matter of recent history in which the present writer has also played his humble part. It would be indeed embarrassing to discuss facts that form quite recent history.

Before bringing this chapter to a close, it may be noted here that during this period also Kashmiri Pandits were culturally quite alive. The torch of Sanskrit learning was kept alight by such eminent scholars as Pandit Sahib Ram, Pandit Dama Kak, Pandit Daya Ram Shastri, Pandit Raja Kak Dhar, Pandit Mahananda Joo Dhar, Pandit Hara Bhatta Shastri, Professor Nityanand Shastri, Pandit Natha Ram Kala, Mahamahopadyaya Pandit Mukunda Ram and last but not the least, Pandit Jagaddhar Zadu and Pandit Madhusudhan Kaul. The latter is a great research scholar, who edited with critical annotations and comments a number of ancient Sanskrit classics which have won for him universal recognition and fame. So also Pandit Ram Chand Kak. He too is a great research scholar and is responsible for bringing Kashmir on the archaeological map of India. He has besides edited many ancient Sanskrit texts, written a valuable book namely *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*. Pandit Anand Kaul Bamzai wrote a lot on the ancient arts and culture of Kashmir. Reference may also be made to Pandit Suraj Kak Mattoo, who was a man of culture and a great social reformer. It was

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during the Dogra period that Kashmiri literature came to be seriously studied by scholars. Principal Jia Lal Kaul and Professor S.K. Toshkhani, two great scholars, unearthed a huge mass of Kashmiri literature which laid buried in some forgotten nooks and corners of old houses. A considerable portion of this literature has been rendered into English by them. It was they who for the first time invented a scientific script of the Kashmiri language. Pandit Raja Kaul Arzbegi was a great poet who wrote exquisite poetry in Persian. Even during his life-time, his fame travelled even to Persia. Pandit Hari Kaul, Pandit Veda Lal Dhar, Pandit Badar Joo and others have also composed good verses in Persian. The Kashmiri language too received enough attention during this period. Pandit Krishna Joo Razdan of Vanpoh was a great poet who produced quite a mass of poetical literature in Kashmiri language. Some of his works have been translated into a number of European languages. His depth of thought and the rythamic flow of words, set in cadenced beautiful rhyme, mark him out as versifier of a very high order. Pandit Lal Lakshman of Kulgam is a poet of great merit, and he has written many poems in the Kashmiri language. To say the least about him, he is a master of satire, which is equally pungent and spicy, sweet and tasty, and replete with humorous thrusts and witty sallies, throwing into bold relief the weaknesses of the society at large or those of an individual. There are yet others, who for want of space do not find mention here.

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29
KASHMIRI PANDITS IN BRITISH INDIA

THE RISE of the British power in India, thanks to its superior organization and diplomacy, which led gradually to the breakdown of the Moghul and the Maratha Empires. As a result, the country came to be divided into a number of small principalities which sprang upon the debris of the once magnificient imperial structures. In the south, Haidar Ali founded an independent State in Mysore, and the breakdown of Peshwa's ascendancy led to the formation of a number of the Maratha States. Asaf Jah installed himself an independent ruler of Hyderabad. Then there were the Rajputana States, and *cis*-Satluj Sikh States such as Patiala, Jind, Faridkot, Nabha and the rest, the other Sikh *misls* having been liquidated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The chaos was so general and the breakdown so complete that even European adventurers such as Sombre tried to establish small States here or there. And, he did establish one near Delhi in Sardhana, where his wife Begum Samru, originally a Kashmiri Muslim girl who later became a Christian, ruled as a semi-sovereign for long. In Bengal, the British installed Mir Jaffar according to their own choice, on the throne left vacant by Siraj-ud-Daula. In almost all these States, there were Kashmiri Pandits. Though their role may not have been such as may be called historical, but there they were, at such far off places as Bengal in the east and Mysore in the south. Pandit Ganga Ram, who later rose very high at the Sikh *durbar*, was a great dignitary at Gwalior. It was from there that he migrated with a number of Pandits and later settled at Lahore on the invitation of the Sikh ruler.

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Some of them were in Tippu Sultan's Mysore; and in the small principalities of Central India, the administration was controlled and carried on mostly by the Pandits. And when the British established their direct rule over the country, they found the Kashmiri Pandits almost everywhere in-charge of the lower branches of administration. The British let them maintain their posts and even gave great encouragement to them. Their attitude towards this community can be summed up in the words of George Campbell who says:

> The Kashmiri Brahmans are quite high Aryans in the type. Their features are very fair and handsome, with high chiselled features and no trace of inter-mixture of the blood of any lower race. It may be partly race and partly occupation, but they have certainly a great refinement and regularity of feature. ... *They rule by the brain and the pen and not by the sword.* It is this character that has gained them the favour of so many rulers of a different faith. Kashmir long belonged to the Kabul Kingdom, but it was never in any degree colonised by the Afghans... The fact seems to be that the valley never belonged to the Afghan nation, but was always retained as a crown appendage of the kings who were very jealous of admitting into it subjects whom they might find it difficult to turn out again *and much preferred to govern through the Pandits...* As a body the Pandits excel in acuteness the same number of any other race with whom they come in contact.[1]

With such an opinion formed by the British about the Kashmiri Pandits, it was but natural that the former should have extended their unstinted support to them. The Pandits' knowldge of Persian and Urdu was of a very high order, and they had taken to the study of English language much earlier than many others. With the reorganization of the courts, they

1. Campbell, George, *Ethnology of India.*

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came to be appointed in subordinate Judiciary, and many amongst them entered the legal profession, from its very start and became the recipients of the highest posts in the Judiciary, *and were the first Indians to be appointed to such posts*. Justice Shambu Nath, whose father Pandit Sadashiva had migrated from Kashmir in the closing years of the eighteenth century, was born at Calcutta in the year 1820 A.D. and was appointed judge of the High Court of Calcutta in 1862 A.D. He was the first Indian to be appointed the judge of a High Court.[2] So also was another Kashmiri Pandit, Justice Ram Narayan Dhar, who was the first Indian to be appointed a judge of the Punjab Chief Court. In the United Provinces, where the Kashmiri Pandits had settled in large numbers the leadership at the Bar was for years held by them. To name just a few, we might refer to Hon'ble Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru, the Hon'ble Pandit Bishambar Nath, Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar, Bar-at-Law; Pandit Jagat Narayan Malla, Pandit Brij Narayan Chakbast, retired hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pandit Kailasha Nath Kathju, Pandit Jankinath Chak, and lastly great Pandit Motilal Nehru. All these were the great nation-builders and took a prominent part in launching the National Movement. In the Punjab, Pandit Shiv Narayan Shamim retained the leadership of the Bar for a number of decades. He was a great poet, a great social reformer, a great student of music and a great Buddhist scholar to which faith he held allegiance. Even in recent time, there has been a galaxy of eminent Kashmiri Pandit judges. To name a few are Justice Wanchoo, Justice S.K. Dhar, Justice Kichlu, Justice Sapru, Justice T.N. Malla, Justice A.N. Malla, Justice P.K. Kaul, Justice R.K. Kaul.

2. Fauq, *Mashahiri Kashmiri*.

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It would not serve any useful purpose to multiply names excepting for the purpose of showing the extent of the official rise of this community. In the Punjab, Raja Pandit Narendra Nath and Raja Pandit Hari Krishan Kaul retired as commissioners. Raja Pandit Narendra Nath, a great land owner and a grandson of Adjutant General Diwan Ajudhya Prashad, took part in politics after his retirement and was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly and was appointed a minister. Raja Pandit Hari Krishan Kaul was appointed chief minister of the Jammu and Kashmir State at a very critical period of its history. Sir Pandit Ganga Ram Kaul and Pandit Brij Lal Nehru rose very high in the Audit and Accounts Departments. Sir Pandit Ganga Ram Kaul is a direct descendant of Prabha Kaul, who was wrapped in a mat and thrown into Dal lake to be drowned there along with a number of Pandits under orders of Mir Hazar Khan, the Afghan *subedar*[3] in 1792 A.D. But he was saved and fled to India. After having reached the highest rung in the official ladder, Sir Pandit Ganga Ram Kaul retired, and was afterwards appointed the chief minister of Jind State, where he served as such for about eleven years. Pandit Manmohan Nath Kaul whose services were lent to Kashmir *durbar* was appointed governor of Kashmir. Apart from the settlement work, which was achieved under his supervision in 1901 A.D., he was a great social reformer. It was he who introduced modern ways of living in the local Pandit population. There is hardly a State of India where at one time or the other a Kashmiri Pandit was not appointed *diwan*. For instance, Sir Pandit Daya Krishan Kaul was the chief minister of Patiala State, Sir Pandit Sukhdev Prashad Kak the *diwan* of Jodhpur, Pandit Dharam Narayan Haksar the *diwan* of Sailana State, Pandit Ram Chand

3. See page 154.

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Kak the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir State, Pandit Brij Mohan Nath Zutshi *diwan* of Ratlam State, Pandit Maharaj Narayan Shivapuri, *diwan* of Datia State etc. There were other Pandits who were appointed ministers in many States, such as, Colonel Sir Pandit Kailasha Narayan Haksar (Gwalior), Pandit P.K. Wattal (Kashmir), Pandit Radha Krishan Kaul (Kashmir), Diwan Gyan Nath (administrator at Nabha) Pandit Tribhuwan Nath Sopori (Udaipur), Pandit Amar Nath Atal (Jaipur), Pandit Narendra Nath Kaul (Kashmir) and others. The last named was a great administrator who solved the problem of the distribution of food grains in Kashmir in a most rational and scientific manner. His name is a byword in Kashmir. The magnificent department known as the Food Control Department built by him and which has stood the test of more than three decades is a living monument to his greatness.

Howsoever high positions the Kashmiri Pandits may have achieved in the administration of the country, yet all this pales into insignificance before the magnificient role that they played in launching the **National Movement**. Their urge for freedom, their patriotic fervour and single-minded devotion to the cause of their country has carved a place of honour for them in the History of India. It was in the year 1885 that the 'Indian National Congress' was founded. Many Kashmiri Pandits associated themselves with the Congress from its very inception. Even before its birth, Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru started in 1879 a paper, 'Indian Herald', which adopted a strong nationalist policy. Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru was a brilliant advocate of his time. He was treated with great consideration and respect by the officials, but he lost touch with them the moment he gave expression to his nationalistic views. Undaunted by official frowns, he moved ahead, and

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joined the 'Indian National Congress'. The fourth session of the Congress was held at Allahabad in 1888. All sorts of impediments were placed in the path of the organizers of the session by the officials and their non-official supporters. Nevertheless a strong Reception Committee with Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru as chairman was formed. Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru "roused the people by his fiery eloquence. He was ready to hold the Congress at any cost, wholly at his own expense, if necessary."[4] Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru had a tremendous sense of humour and wit which served him well at the most crucial times. He went on a tour of the provinces for collection of funds for the Allahabad Session. The officials and their supporters, along with abuse and opposition, hurled ridicule on the organizers. The Pandit was making an appeal for funds at Agra when the opponents sent a small boy with a *paisa* to the rostrum, where the boy presented the *paisa* to Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru as a contribution to the Congress. Along with this, they shouted and jeered at the Pandit. But Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru at once thundered out saying that the country was bound to be free where patriotism had found room enough even in the heart of a small boy who having got a *paisa* from his mother offered it to the nation. The *paisa* was put to auction and it fetched a few thousand rupees. Pandit Ajudhyana Nath Kunzru was elected to the U.P. Legislative Council and was a fellow of both the Calcutta and the Allahabad Universities. He was proposed for the presidentship of Nagpur Congress but, before he could preside, he was taken seriously ill and breathed his last in 1892 at the age of fifty-two years.

There is yet another great Kashmiri Pandit, a close collaborator of Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru, whose

4. Satyapal and Prabodhe Chandra, *Sixty years of Congress*, p. 130.

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contribution to the building up of the Congress movement in its early years has been in no way small or meagre. His name is Pandit Bishambar Nath, a prominent advocate of Allahabad. He joined the Congress soon after its formation and was elected the chairman of the Reception Committee on the occasion of the second Congress session at Allahabad, held in 1892. On the opening day of the session Pandit Bishambar Nath was taken seriously ill and was advised complete rest by his doctors and friends, but, unmindful of his own health and the advice of friends, he attended the session and delivered a learned address which was greatly appreciated and applauded by the audience. He was elected to the Viceroy's Legislative Council and continued there for a number of years. The depth of his popularity can be gauged from the fact that his return to the council was always uncontested. His council speeches were brilliant pieces of advocacy characterized by a spirit of fearlessness which was unthinkable in 1890s. After the conviction of Lokamanya Tilak, in 1898, for sedition, the British Government wanted to fight the growing political unrest by further drastic changes in the Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes. Pandit Bishambar Nath, in his speeches, reduced the arguments on the government side to smithreens, and succeeded largely in curbing the mischief that was sought to be done. Pandit Bishambar Nath was proposed for the presidentship of the Lahore Congress in 1900, but he refused the honour for reasons of health. He died in the year 1907. The torch of national service was kept incessantly alight by other members of this community, though small in stature.

Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar Bar-at-law, joined the Congress with the dawn of the twentieth century. He is the first Kashmiri Pandit to have gone to England for higher studies. Orthodoxy in religion was then at its highest amongst the Kashmiri Pandits, and when he came back after called to

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the Bar, a howl was raised by a section of Kashmiri Pandit community all over India. There were some amongst them who were of the opinion that he could never regain his caste, even after very elaborate *prayaschitam*, though the *vivastha* of the Pandits from Kashmir was that Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar[5] could be taken back into his caste after due purificatory ceremonies. Pandit Bishan Narayan performed the purificatory rites, and was admitted into their fold by the advanced section of the community, but the more orthodox refused point-blank to have any truck with him. They even nicknamed the advanced Pandits as *bishan sabhais*. For themselves they reserved the pompous title of *dharam sabhais*. There was a great controversy and, apart from many other things, some very good poetry was the result. Pandit Ratan Nath Dhar 'Sarshar', a Kashmiri poet of Lucknow, composed some very beautiful verses, called by him as *masnavi*, in defence of Pandit Bishan Narayan. His first public appearance in which Pandit Bishan Narayan made a mark was in 1903 at the Madras Congress session, when he moved the resolution on Official Secrets Bill. While moving the resolution, Pandit Bishan Narayan said:

> Lord Curzon is astonished that this should be described as Russianizing the administration. I am astonished that any one should be so imperfectly informed regarding the Russian Government as to think that it has got anything in its purely civil laws so arbitrary and so disastrous to the civil liberties of the people as Lord Curzon's Bill when passed would be in this country.

5. Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar belonged to the Dhar family of Kashmir which has produced many chief ministers during the Moghul, Afghan and Sikh rule in Kashmir such as Pandit Kailasha Dhar, Pandit Sahaj Ram Dhar and his son Ganesha Pandit Dhar. Pandit D.P. Dhar, the present Deputy Home Minister of Kashmir is a direct descendent of Ganesh Pandit Dhar.

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In 1911, he was elected president of the Congress, which was held at Calcutta. As president of the Congress he delivered a brilliant address, every word of which inspired a deep sense of patriotism, though on the whole the address was moderate in outlook. No apology is offered to give a rather lengthy excerpt from his address:

> The root cause of most of our misfortunes, which if not corrected, forebodes serious disorders in the future, is the growth of an unsympathetic and illiberal spirit in the bureaucracy towards the new born hopes and ideals of the Indian people. While a new India has gradually been rising up, that spirit too has been growing and so a critical situation has arisen. The bureaucracy with its vested interests, its domineering habits, its old traditions of absolute and unquestioned authority, suspicious of knowledge, and averse to innovation like very close corporation, cut off from the people by its racial exclusiveness and wedded to a paternal system of government under which it has so long enjoyed power and pelf but which is discordant with the more liberal ideas of the day, is antagonistic to the educated classes who are filled with new knowledge and are concious of their political rights. The bureaucracy as a body has never been in sympathy with the new aspirations of educated India...
>
> In the pursuit of a high ideal we must not forget the difficulties that beset our path. Long and weary is the journey that lies before those who undertake to mould a people into the unity of a nation. Our agitation, in order to be effective, must be national, not sectarian, persistent not spasmodic, directed by intelligence and wisdom, and not impulsive and reckless. India needs bold and enthusiastic character, not men of pale hopes, and middling expectations but courageous natives, fanatics in the cause of their country.
>
> Whose breath is agitation
> And whose life a storm whereon they ride.

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For such type of leadership the country had not to wait for long. It was just within less than a decade that there appeared on the political scene some very dynamic personalities, "whose breath was indeed agitation and whose life a storm whereon they rode". And it would have been a source of great satisfaction to the departed soul of Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar to know that this type of leadership was provided by his own community.

Mention may here be made of Pandit Brij Narayan Chakbast, who was a great Urdu poet. Though primarily a poet, he was largely influenced by Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar who infused his own political fervour in him. Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar was himself a poet of great merit. Pandit Chakbast revolutionized Urdu poetry in so far as he made a departure from the orthodox standards which guided the course of Urdu poetry till then. He is the first Urdu poet who introduced patriotic themes in his poems, and kindled a passion for freedom in the minds of middle class youth in the United Provinces. An ardent supporter of Home Rule, a famous line occuring in one of his poems, "We shall reject even Heaven if offered as an alternative to Home Rule", remained a slogan for long.

Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar died in the year 1916 at an early age of fifty-two. Soon after, Congress converted itself into a revolutionary body under the unique, unparalleled and unprecedented leadership of Mahatma Gandhi; and with it was introduced a new era in the politics of the country. At the very start of his great movement, Mahatma Gandhi was able to enlist the support of the great Nehrus, whose part in building the National Movement has been so great that it can be asserted, as has been asserted by many without the least fear of contradiction, that "the story of the Nehrus is the history

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of the Indian Freedom Movement itself". The elder Nehru, Pandit Motilal, was in the Congress much earlier than 1907. Speaking in general terms, he was then quite moderate in politics, and was a bitter critic of the advanced section known then as the extremists whom he described as mere talkers totally cut off from reality. He was elected the president of the U.P. Congress Provincial Committee, and was present at Surat when a schism occurred in the Congress. In short, he was not new to the Congress when he later assumed its leadership though his earlier connections with it were that of a 'moderate politician'.

C.F. Andrews, who has credited Pandit Motilal Nehru with being "A maker of modern India", has described him in the following words:

> Kashmiri Brahmans, to which class Pandit Motilal Nehru belonged, are well known all over the north of India both for their intellectual powers and fine appearance. They are by birth, what may truly be called, an aristocratic race, and easily recognized as such. Motilal was typical of this distinguished class and in his old age he gained the reputation of being the 'aristocract of the Assembly'. His spotless *khaddar* dress, with his white Kashmiri shawl, suited him perfectly, and his portrait is rightly given the place of honour in his son's *Autobiography*. The fine features, which I have mentioned and the fair complexion run through the whole family and have descended from father to son.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has drawn a portrait of the great Pandit in the following words:

> ...in him too there was strength of personality and a measure of kingliness... In any gathering in which he was present he would inevitably be the centre and the hub. Whatever the place where he sat at table, it would

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> become, as an English Judge said later, the head of the table. He was neither meek nor mild... Consciously imperious, he evoked great loyalty as well as bitter opposition. It was difficult to feel neutral about him; one had to like him or dislike him. With a broad forehead, tight lips and a determined chin, he had a marked resemblance to the busts of the Roman Emperors in the museums in Italy... there was a magnificence about him and a grand manner, which is sadly to seek in this world of today.[6]

For his magnificient deeds and achievements, collosal sufferings and sacrifices, Pandit Motilal Nehru has been quite rightly described as "the father of defiant patriotism" and the "first and foremost pillar of Gandhism". Pandit Motilal Nehru is further described as a great freedom fighter, "who transmuted the spineless leadership of the Indian Liberals into a death defying crusade of sterling independence". He was an ardent advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity. The Congress-League Scheme, the first conscious attempt at solving the Hindu-Muslim problem was framed in his house in 1916. He was apparently very much satisfied with his achievement but his political beliefs were quite in keeping with the moderate creed though signs were not wanting which pointed that a big change in the mind of Pandit Motilal Nehru was in the offing. And the change was soon seen. Afterwards, what Pandit Motilal Nehru did and what he achieved is a matter of recent history, and need not be given in detail here. But it should be noted that the massacre at Amritsar and the Martial Law atrocities in the Punjab shook the very foundations of the faith. And when the call for non-cooperation came, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, he fully responded to it.

6. Nehru, Jawaharlal, An Autubiography, p. 130.

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No doubt he did it slowly, and deliberately so realizing all the consequences which it involved. The changeover was not an easy task. Pandit Motilal Nehru's earnings were huge and his generosity was equally great. His standard of living was very high. He had many European and Indian friends belonging to high aristocratic circles. To change all that for a life of poverty and privations and give up his huge lucrative practice at the Bar was indeed very difficult. But he did all this. Henceforth, his soul did shine in its pristine resplendence and glory. Pandit Motilal Nehru went to jail many times. He drafted a constitution for India, now known as the 'Nehru Report', almost single-handedly. Twice he presided over the Congress, organized the first regular opposition in the Assembly, and as a leader of the opposition and a parliamentarian he did not have many parallels in the world. His burning patriotism can be gathered from his last political utterance when he said:

> **Decide India's fate in Swaraj Bhawan, decide it in my presence and let me be a party to the final honourable settlement of the fate of my motherland. Let me die, if die I must, in the lap of a free India. Let me sleep my last sleep not in a subject country, but in a free country.**[7]

In 1928 Pandit Motilal Nehru presided over the Calcutta Congress,[8] where an ultimatum was given to the British Government that in case the Dominion Status was not granted within a year, the country would insist on independence. The next session of the Congress was held at Lahore under the presidentship of his illustrious son, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. It was a unique sight to see the father handing over the charge

7. Ref. Panikkar, M. and Parashar, A. (eds.), *The Voice of Freedom*, pp. 41 ff.
8. Ref. Panikkar, M. and Parashar, A. (eds.), *The Voice of Freedom*, pp. 41 ff.

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of the Congress to his son. Though Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was hardly forty then, yet in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, he "possessed dash of the warrior and the prudence of the statesman in whose hands nation was safe". Prophetic words these ! Subsequent events have fully shown that the nation remained indeed safe in the hands of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. As customary with it, the British Government failed to understand the spirit of times, and refused to grant India even Dominion Status within the year of grace, resulting in the Congress passing a resolution demanding full independence. The honour of raising the banner of independence at midnight of 31st December, 1929 was reserved by an inscrutable providence for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Thenceforth started Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's long history of jail-going. Nine times was he imprisoned spending the best part of his life in jails. And when in 1936 there came about a temporary break in his jail-going (after having spent about five years in imprisonment) his friends and foes found him possessing greater vigour and freshness. Elections were soon in the offing. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made an extensive all-India tour in the shortest possible time. Wherever he went, he simply conquered. The polls were swept, and the Congress rule in the eight provinces, including the Muslim Frontier Province, was the result.

II

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's solution of the problems that have confronted the country was always characterized by a very bold and courageous approach. His thought was always clear and his action therefore always effective. In the matters of detail, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru may have sometimes compromised here or there but on matters of principle he never gave up. Hard prison life extending over years at a stretch

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did not diminish his rigid adherence to his principles of life even by an iota though it meant, at times, huge suffering and sacrifice. His sixth term of imprisonment, which was quite a long term, came at an end on 30th August, 1933. Soon after, in September of the same year, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in spite of the fact that his household affairs were not too happy - his ailing mother, Swarup Rani, who herself had taken a very prominent part in the Freedom Movement and had even faced police batons, was hospitalized. His brave and noble wife, Kamla Nehru on whom had fallen the task of attending on Swarup Rani, was herself unwell. He managed to find time to survey the Indian situation in such a bold, courageous and detached manner for his three articles entitled "Whither India" which baffled both his friends and critics. Unmindful of the troubles which lay ahead, he posed and discussed the question on what was the aim of Freedom Movement in a very bold and frank manner. Says he:

> Is our aim human welfare or the preservation of the class privileges and the vested interests of pampered groups ? The question must be answered clearly and unequivocally by each one of us. There is no room for quibbling when the fate of nations and millions of human beings is at stake. The day for palace intrigues and parlour politics and pacts and compromises passes when the masses enter politics. Their manners are not of the drawing room; we never took the trouble to teach them any manners. Their school is the school of events and suffering is their teacher. They learn their politics from great movements which bring out the true nature of individuals and classes and the civil disobedience movement has taught the Indian masses many a lesson which they will never forget.

This would show the depth of his convictions before which everything including collosal sufferings and sacrifices paled into insignificance. And in all this he always had the support

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of his noble wife who, even on death-bed, encouraged him to follow the path he had chosen. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was serving his seventh term in prison, when the health of Kamala Nehru deteriorated so much that he was temporarily released from jail to be with her in her last moments. After eleven days, Jawaharlal Nehru was again taken back to jail. Suggestions were made to him on behalf of the government that if he gave even an informal assurance that he would desist from politics in future he would be released to attend on Kamala Nehru. While he was taking leave of Kamala Nehru, she whispered to him, "What is this, about your giving an assurance to the government? Do not give it". This small sentence by itself speaks volumes. The true womanhood of India spoke through her. And what has been the result of all this? A free India, and an India which goes higher and higher in the world's estimation. For all this, he received high tributes from all who count. Some have described him as a great patriot, a fearless freedom fighter. Others have praised his high artistic sense, his great literary attainments and real knowledge of history. There are yet others who admire his high statesmanship, his unequivocal support to the principles of international peace and amity. There are many who described him as a man of great decency, for whom the most prized object in this world was full human dignity. And there are not a few who see in him the great upholder of high moral values and ethical standards, which are by and by recending to the background in the world of today. Some look upon him as a political prophet who predicted many world events including the Second World War with great precision.

All this is undeniable. Also with regard to Indian Freedom Movement his contribution has been unique. It was he who for the first time in India directed thought on the right lines and cleared the mind of the freedom fighters of the cobwebs

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of doubt and confusion which was reacting very adversely on their thought and activities. Gandhiji started his great movement . The whole of India rose in one voice. But very few knew as to what was the end to which the movement would lead. Everybody had his own notions about the movement, and everybody interpreted it according to his own way. Even Gandhiji did not encourage clear thinking on this matter. Sir Valentine Chirol once in 1921 questioned Mahatma Gandhi in Anand Bhawan at Allahabad as to what was his conception of *swaraj*. Quick came the answer from Mahatmaji that under *swaraj* "the lion shall lie with the lamb". For the time being this might mean a lot, and yet mean very little. If once the things having settled down, the question as to "for whose freedom did we fight" is sure to crop up in its grim nakedness. It was after all left to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to give a definite shape and form to the Indian Freedom Movement, and pull it out of the thraldom of doubt and confusion. In his "Whither India" Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has posed this question with great clarity and precision. Says he:

> Again whose freedom are we particularly striving for, for nationalism covers many sins and includes many conflicting elements. There is the feudal India of the princes, the India of the big *zamindars*, of small *zamindars*, of the professional classes, of the agriculturists, of the industrialists, of the bankers, of the lower middle class, of the workers. There are the interests of foreign capital and those of home capital, of foreign services and home services. The nationalist answer is to prefer home interests to foreign interests, but beyond that it does not go. It tries to avoid disturbing the class divisions or the social status quo. It imagines that the various interests will somehow be accommodated when the country is free. Being essentially a middle class movement, nationalism works

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> chiefly in the interest of that class. It is obvious that there are serious conflicts between various interests in a country and every law, every policy which is good for one interest may be harmful for another. What is good for the Indian prince may be thoroughly bad for the people of his State, what is profitable for the Zamindar may ruin many of his tenants, what is demanded by foreign capital may crush the rising industries of the country. Nothing is more absurd than to imagine that all the interests in the nation can be fitted in without injury to any. At every step some have to be sacrificed for others...

Further, in the same pamphlet, he writes:

> India's struggle today is part of the great struggle which is going on all over the world for the emancipation of the oppressed. Essentially this is an economic struggle, with hunger and want as its driving forces, although it puts on nationalist and other dresses. Indian freedom is necessary because the burden on the Indian masses as well as on the middle classes is too heavy to be borne and must be lightened or done away with. The measure of freedom is the extent to which this burden is removed. This burden is due to the vested interests of a foreign government as well as those of certain groups and classes in India and abroad. The achievement of freedom thus becomes a question, as Gandhiji said recently, of divesting vested interests. If an indigenous government had kept all the vested interests intact, there would not even be the shadow of freedom. *Swaraj* or freedom from exploitation for the masses is not a fine paper constitution or a problem of the hereafter. It is question of here and now of immediate relief. Roasted lamb and mint sauce may be a tasty dish for those who eat it but the poor lamb is not likely to appreciate the force of the best of arguments which points out the beauty of sacrifice for the good of the elect and the joys of close communion, even though dead, with mint sauce.

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The pamphlet concludes with the following passage:

> Whither India ? Surely to the great human goal of social and economic equality, to the ending of all exploitation of nation by nation and class by class, to national freedom within the frame-work of an international co-operative socialist world federation. This is not such an empty idealist dream as some people imagine. It is within the range of the practical politics of today and the near future. We may not have it within our grasp but those with vision can see it emerging on the horizon. And even if there be delay in the realization of our goal, what does it matter if our eyes look steadily in front. For in the pursuit itself of a mighty purpose there is joy and happiness and a measure of achievements.

Upto September 1933, this type of language was certainly unheard of. The articles which constitute the pamphlet created a stir in the whole of Asia and these were translated into many Asiatic languages. In India too it certainly created an unprecedented ideological revolution. But all this was a bitter pill for the British rulers. As hinted earlier by 'The Statesman', he was soon arrested and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

It is indeed impossible to recount the achievements of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the short space available, yet a brief reference to the solution provided by him to the problems emerging out of the existence of the Indian States cannot be avoided. For one reason or the other the people of Indian States were a neglected lot, the Congress policy from the very beginning was to ignore the Indian States. There were some amongst the Congressmen who looked upon the Indian princes "as the visible representation of India's past glory", and there were others who saw in Indian States "self-government in action". Least did they know that it was not the love of India's past glory, but their self-interest, which provided reason to

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the British Government to continue the princes' existence. It was Lord Canning who soon after the mutiny said that:

> ...it was long ago said by Sir John Malcolm that if we made all India into districts, it was not in the nature of things that our Empire should last fifty years; but that if we should keep a number of native States without political power, but as loyal instruments, we should exist in India as long as our naval supremacy was maintained.

Lord Canning proceeds:

> ...of the substantial truth of his opinion I have no doubt, and the recent events have made it more deserving of our attention than ever.

Thus did the Indian States spring into existence, their justification being consolidation and strengthening of the British rule. The princes on their part fully justified Sir John Malcolm's remarks. Describing the condition of his subjects, the Maharaja of Kota wrote to the Viceroy on 28th August, 1909:

> My own subjects are all engaged in their agricultural pursuits, and hardly anybody reads a newspaper, and the knowledge of the fact that there are some political activities going on in British India is limited only to some people amongst the upper classes and some State servants.

The Maharaja of Kota's letter was in answer to a circular letter of the Viceroy addressed to the princes, directing them to prevent progressive ideas from percolating into their States. Other princes also wrote in a similar vein. With the growth of a revolutionary movement in India, the British Government now rivetted its attention more and more on the Indian States as its least retreat. The princes were organized in a 'Chamber of Princes'. It was proposed that the Indian Federation would constitute of provinces and the Indian States, and the princes

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would act as hereditary provincial heads. The States' Subjects were nowhere in the picture, and in all matters of interest to them, they were to be represented by the princes who were described as their "natural leaders". The princes were encouraged to take their stand on time-worn treaties and, thus, stand as a bulwark against the rising onslaught of democracy. But seeing all this, the Congress stuck to its policy of non-interference in the Indian States. If the things had taken the course visualized by the British Government and the princes, the problem would no doubt have baffled every attempt at a solution. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru saw all this. Even though expressing an open disagreement with some of his colleagues, he raised his voice against this as early as in 1929, when in his presidential address at Lahore Congress he said:

> I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes.

Side by side with this bold declaration, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru organized an All-India organization named 'States' Peoples Conference', which provided a platform for the States' peoples who were till then a backward and a disorganized lot. Within a few years, this organisation became a formidable organization with its branches all over the country, though much to the disappointment of Kota and other princes, who had built many a castle on the fact that "their subjects were engaged in agricultural pursuits only and hardly anybody read a newspaper". The result was a general awakening amongst the States' Subjects. Many movements were started by them in which many a princes had to eat the humble-pie. And when the time of leaving India by the British came, the princes, though they had succeeded in securing a verdict of independence from the outgoing British, and were in fact busy building and nourishing dreams of an independent

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sovereignity, found themselves squeezed out by the pressure exerted by the Indian democracy on the one side, and on the other, by their own subjects, who far from being the docile and backward creatures of the Kota variety, were now fired with a potential revolutionary zeal to secure their own freedom. Had not Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with his keen political foresight, caught the time by the forelock and organized the States' people in time, it would have been really a very tough job for even the tallest amongst the Indian leaders to find a solution to this formidable problem in the manner it was found. The closest parallel to the situation thus created would have been that of the Portuguese Goa. If the Portuguese had their helpers, the princely order had no less.

For Kashmir, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru brought a new message and a new hope and gave a real shape and form to the movement which was till then not very clear in its aims and objects. He planted the young sapling of nationalism in Kashmir, and nourished it under his own tender care and guidance which, by the time India came to be partitioned, had grown into a mighty tree which provided shelter to many a weary traveller who ran away from the scorching heat of the communal fires which were ablaze then in the neighbouring province of the Punjab. The lesson of nationalism had gone so deep in the minds of the people here that when the time of opting with India or Pakistan came, the leadership of Kashmir, which was predominantly Muslim, with one voice declared their wish for India. This was a great victory for the forces of nationalism and an equally great triumph for the ideal of secularism.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is yet in the thick of the battle. It is plainly visible to anybody that destiny has in store many an achievements yet for him. But it needs to be stated here

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that he has always had the greatest measure of co-operation available to him from everybody including his own family. His sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, who received her political training and inspiration from her great father, Pandit Motilal Nehru, has always worked in close co-operation with her brother. When she came to Kashmir in 1933 she was hardly thirty-three. Least could it be known then that there was such a spark in her soul, which in 1945 produced a blazing fire which burnt to ashes all the evil effects of a vicious propaganda that was set afloat in America by interested quarters with the active co-operation of some Indians themselves. She was arrested on 12th August 1942 three days after Gandhiji's arrest. After having remained in jail for nearly a year, she was released. In November 1944 she left India and landed at San Francisco in April 1945. The conference of the United Nations was held in May 1945. India was represented there by Ramaswami Mudaliar and Feroz Khan Noon who were the nominees of the British Government. At the very outset, she challenged the representative character of the so-called Indian representation at the conference and declared:

> I desire to make it clear that the so-called Indian representatives have not the slighest representative character. They have no sanction, no mandate from any responsible parties in India. They are merely British Government's nominees.

The newspaper comment on this declaration may be given in the words of a prominent journalist Iftone, who said that:

> Indian delegates have been chosen without consultation of Indian parties or political leaders, most of whom are in jail, including the far-seeing Nehru *who would have shone* even in the gathering of giants.

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Many conferences were addressed by her. At one such conference Feroz Khan Noon, who along with his companion, according to a newspaper report, having "sleepless nights", sent his stenographer Khan to heckle her. The newspaper comments on this episode may be given in the words of 'The Pasbom' of the Associated Press of America:

> It must have been most uncomfortable for his boss to learn today that the efforts of his stooge instead of disrupting Mrs. Pandit's press conference have boomranged and Mrs. Pandit has received much wider publicity both at the radio and the press than she might have otherwise. Yesterday's evening papers and this morning's papers have given her a prominent space with pictures. One paper had a big picture of Mrs. Pandit being garlanded by Amritlal Seth and a small picture of Khan with his name and 'ejected from Conference'.

Though a rebel then with no official recognition, Vijayalakshmi Pandit created a great and lasting effect in America. At Baltimore, she was given the highest official recognition. The Mayor received her at the station and presented to her the keys of the city. Besides addressing press conferences and public meetings, she submitted a memorandum to the U.N. Conference and made out a strong plea for an immediate declaration of India's independence. She was given audience by the president and Lady Truman. She entertained the foreign ministers of Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia. In short, even in 1945, she made the voice of India heard in all quarters of the globe.

During the freedom movement, Vijayalakshmi Pandit went to jail a number of times. In 1936, she was elected a member of the U.P. Legislature and was later appointed a minister in the first popular ministry. She is the first Indian woman minister. The ministry was a short-lived affair and she had to

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resign soon after the outbreak of the Second World War, yet her achievements in so short a period were in no way meagre or small. For the thoroughness with which she conducted her business as a minister, she got praises and admiration from all and sundry. What followed next, including her election to U.N. presidentship, is a matter of recent history and no detailed reference is called for here.

There is yet another great Kashmiri Pandit named Pandit Kailasha Nath Kathju,[9] whose part in furtherance of the National Movement has been indeed great.

A great advocate and one of the ablest lawyers that Allahabad has ever produced. With a very high monthly income, Pandit Kailasha Nath Kathju enjoyed, even before his political career, a very high reputation for his honesty and integrity. He has ever been known as a person of very deep religious convictions, high moral principles, and ethical standards. Unmindful of the monetary loss and discomforts of a jail life, he dedicated himself whole-heartedly in the national struggle and courted imprisonment more than once. He was appointed minister of justice in U.P. in the year 1937. After independence, he was appointed governor of Bengal and later his services were utilized in the Central Cabinet as home minister and defence minister.

There are many other Kashmiri Pandits who also have contributed their mite to the National Movement. No reference need be made to all of them, but the picture will

9. Pandit Kailasha Nath's ancestors used to live in a Mohalla in Srinagar known as Kaithal where even now stands a temple known as Kathaleshwar. The residents of Kaithal are described in Kashmiri language as Kathij. This expression would mean in Kashmiri 'one residing or belonging to Kaithal'. Kathij in course of time became Kathju in India but in Kashmir they are known as Kathij.

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remain incomplete if specific mention is not made of two Kashmiri ladies, viz. Rameshwari Nehru and Lado Rani Zutshi. Rameshwari Nehru has always been a true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. The work of social upliftment which has been done by her has already created a place of honour for her all over India. Lado Rani Zutshi has always been a true Congressite, and she belonged to the first batch of public spirited women who took to Congress work with zeal and seriousness.

There have been other Kashmiri Pandits, who though not Congressmen, have also played their part on the Indian political stage. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who for decades remained a leading light of the liberal party, had by dint of his clarity of thought and cleanliness of action combined with a great intellectual eminence, succeeded in carving a place for himself in the country's history. Even his worst critics have never denied what has been described by C.F. Andrews as "his rugged honesty of purpose". Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was essentially a great constitutional lawyer. Any mention of civil disobedience or non co-operation greatly annoyed him. His legal training had made him over-conservative in action. He was appointed a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, in 1921, when non co-operation movement was at its highest. But he resigned much before his term of office expired. It is said that the Viceroy Lord Reading always relied on his counsel, but Sir Pandit Tej Bahadur Sapru was also frank enough in giving quite unpalatable evidence. So far as the harsh treatment meted out to the Indians outside India was concerned, Sir Pandit Tej Bahadur always raised his voice in the frankest and most indignant manner against it. As a representative he attended He attended all the three Round Table Conferences held in England to frame a constitution for India.

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Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru[10] has remained a leading light of the 'Servants of India Society' for quite a number of years, and has done good service to the country in an un-ostentatious manner.

There have been a number of great educationists amongst the Kashmiri Pandits who have contributed their mite to the building of modern India. Pandit Jagat Narayan Malla, a leading advocate of his time, was the vice-chancellor of Lucknow University for a number of years. His part in organizing the University has been appreciated by everybody. He was appointed a member of the Hunter Committee constituted by the British Government, in 1919, to hold an inquiry into the Martial Law regime in the Punjab. By his wonderful cross-examination of General Dyer and others, which created an India-wide sensation, he exposed in its entirety the hollowness of the government case. He was later elected to the Assembly, and became a minister under the Dyarchy regime. Pandit Iqbal Narayan Gurtu was the vice-chancellor of Allahabad University, and Diwan Anand Kumar[11] has now been for many years the vice-chancellor of the Punjab University. After the partition, the University was well-nigh ruined, but by his assiduous work he succeeded in resuscitating it.

Before closing this chapter, reference may be made to the contribution made to the Urdu literature and poetry by the Kashmiri Pandits during this period. Pandit Daya Shankar Nasim, who died in 1843 at an early age of thirty-two, is even now considered amongst the great poets. He had composed a poem *Guli Bakawli*, which had elicited highest

10. Son of Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru.
11. Son of Pandit Narendra Nath.

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praise from all literary circles. Pandit Ratan Nath Dhar besides being a poet of high order has also made a collosal service to the Urdu prose. His *Fasana Azad*, in which he has depicted the life of the Nawabs of Lucknow is a significant work in Urdu language. To Pandit Brij Narayan Chakbast and Pandit Bishan Narayan Dhar references have been made earlier, but as long as Urdu language lives, the names of Pandit Tribhuwan Nath Sapru 'Hijr', Pandit Amar Nath Madan, Pandit Jankinath Madan, Pandit Brij Mohan Dattatreya 'Kaifi', Pandit Hara Gopal Kaul "Khasta",[12] Pandit Nand Lal Talib, Pandit Dina Nath Mast, Master Zinda Kaul and about two hundred other Kashmiri Pandit poets will also live as those of great poets.

12. Pandit Shiva Narayan Fotetar M.P. is his daughter's son.

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GLOSSARY

afsar-ul-ataba	minister of health.
ahqar	most vile or contemptible (used in self depreciation for I or me).
amir-ul-momin	a title used by Muhammad of Ghazni for himself.
anna	$^1/_{16}{}^{th}$ part of a rupee.
azan	summoning to prayer.
banda	slave (in the sence of a devotee).
bandai dargah	a title meaning the slave of (your) threshold.
bandai khas	a title meaning excellent, distinct or private slave/devotee.
begar	employing anyone without a remuneration.
bhasha bhatta	Kashmiri brahmans who studied *bhasta* i.e. Sanskrit and took charge of the religious affairs.
bhatta	brahmans of Kashmir.
bilor khana	house for poor.
daftari diwani	Accounts' Department.
dagh (shawl)	affixing a stamp-mark on manifactured shawls introduced by Pandit Dila Ram during his ministership.
dharmartha	for the religions purposes (from Hindu point of view).
diler jung	a title meaning brave warrior/fighter.
diwan	incharge of financial matters.
diwan-i-mal	holding full charge of finances.

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durbar	a house, dwelling; a court, area; an audience chamber.
faujdar	an officer of the police and chief magistrate of the police who takes cognizance of all criminal matters.
faujdari	the office or jurisdiction of a *faujdar.*
fauj-i-khas	special brigade or body-guard.
gaddi	throne.
ghamkhwar	devouring sorrow i.e. afflicted, vexed, sad, condoling, pitying, an intimate friend (as partaking in another's feelings).
ghat	a landing place.
harkara basha	an attendant upon men of rank or messenger.
harkarah	superintendent of the spies.
hazaris	lientenants, nominally commanders of one thousand.
hundi (hundika)	a bill of exchange.
ibn	a son.
itmad-ul-saltanat	a title conferred by the Mughal king meaning 'in kingdom's confidence'.
jagir	land grant.
jagirdar	land-lord.
jamadar	a native officer of the army so called; the head of any body, as guides, *harkaras*.
jazia	poll tax.
kardar	busy, occupied or a money maker.
karkun	Kashmiri brahmans who studied Persian and joined government services.
kathi	scaffold.

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khanaqah	a monestry for *sufis* or *darwishes* a convent, chapel.
kharwar	a measure equal to two mounds and three *seers*.
khillat	a rich sword-sheath of leather adorned with jewels and gold.
kuhl	a stream.
madar-ul-miham	chief minister.
mansab	post, ministry or office.
mansabdar	military officer, an office holder/ appointed to an office under government.
mashirul-mulk	a title conferred by the Moghul king meaning 'a senator'.
matam sarai	a community building built for the purpose of mourning.
maulvi	elevator, exalter, raiser.
maulla	elevated, sublime.
mirza raja	a title conferred by Moghul king on a Hindu Raja; *mirza* is a Persian title, when it is put after a proper name it usually means 'prince' but when it appears before then it means a gentleman, an educated person, a scholar.
misl	retinue.
moqul	former or retired .
muqim	stationed.
munsiff	a district or village judge
mustajari	on lease or contract.
mustamarr	lasting long (in Muslim religious sense).
mutasaddi-gari	collectorship.
nai'b qaim-muqam	deputy or superintendent.

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namaz	prayer..
naubat shahi	royal watch tower.
nazaran	presents.
pandas	the persons who maintain/ed the geneological record of pilgrims at the pilgrimage places like Martanda (in Kashmir), Kurukshetra (in Haryana) etc.
pargana	sub-districts, (traditionally Kashmir was divided into 36 *parganas*).
parganadar	chief of the *pargana*.
pathashala	centres where the traditional brahmanical teaching was imparted.
patwari	officer who prepared village records.
peshkar	clerk, assistant; even could be a chief minister.
prayaschitam	religious act to atone for sin.
purohit	a family-priest who conducts all the ceremonial rites of the family.
Qalima	holy Muslim formula.
qanungo	provincial head who was incharge of the welfare of irrigation and was also to prepare settlement records.
qazi	judge.
qizil-bash	soldiers.
qulli	being rear.
rais	a wealthy person.
rani	queen.
sadar qanungo	inter-provincial head.
sahibkar	Chief Minister.
sanad	a sword of honour.
sanyasi	an ascetic.
sarkari	governmental.

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Sayyids	descendents of Hussain.
seer	a measurement equal to a little less than a kilogram.
shahzada	prince.
shali	food grains.
shari'a	ordinance, law (Muslim law).
shiqdar	a governor; an officer appointed to collect the revenue from a certain division of land.
shuja-ul-mulk	a title conferred by the king meaning 'brave from the country'.
suba	province.
subedar	provincial head or a Viceroy.
tabarrum	being stupefied, wearing, disgusted.
tapancha	a small rifle.
taqawi	strengthening, assisting.
thanedar	the resident head official of a village or *pargana* who collected the government revenue.
tilaka	symbol of wisdom (mark made by Hindus on the forehead with sandalwood paste or unguents).
Turushkas or Turks	name given by Kalhana to Muslims.
vivastha (vyavastha)	arrangement, settlement.
wazir	a vizier, counsellors, minister of state, lieutenant of king (as bearing the weight of government).
yogi	a saint.
zamindar	an officer under the Moghul government of Hindustan who had charge of the land and collected the revenues, for which he was allowed a certain percentage.

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zari duh	smoke money.
zari habubat	money for grains or seeds.
zari niyaz	money for necessity or prayer or gift or a thing dedicated.
ziyarat	visiting; a visit (especially one paid to a sacred tomb), a religious visitation a pilgrimage.
zulum	tyrany, violence, cruelty, oppression.

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A History of Kashmiri Pandits written by Justice Jia Lal Kilam, was first published in 1955. It was very well received, much for its record of the socio-political and historical importance. The scholars and general readers appreciated the publication within the Kashmiri Pandit community and outside as well.

The contents of the publication are relevant even today, not only by way of filling the void. It also provides a valuable source material on the past history of Kashmir, with particular reference to the Kashmiri Pandits as the earliest settlers of that ancient and beautiful land. It further provides background to the current turmoil of this illustrious and oppressed community, which is of considerable pertinence. While giving a broad picture with mixed touches the publication covers wide range of the struggle of this community in the course of history.

Justice Jia Lal Kilam was born in a Kashmiri Pandit family in 1898. After his graduation in Srinagar he joined Law College in Lahore in 1919. Starting his practice in the High Court of J&K State he earned a name both as a civil and a criminal lawyer. He was elected president of the Kashmir Bar Association for nearly a decade. Justice Kilam also played an important role in many social and political activities in the State. Besides his profession and interest in politics he had a flair for writing and dabbled in journalism when there were not many newspapers published in the State. He was the first Kashmiri Pandit to be elected to the *Praja Sabha* (Legislative Assembly) besides being elected as municipal commissioner. In 1948 he was elevated to the Bench as judge of the High Court of J&K State.

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